

Theological and Catechetical implications of the Church proclaiming children killed before birth as companions of the first Holy Innocents.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to all children killed before birth, in memory of their silent suffering. I place their cause in the hearts of Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph for the Glory of the Most Blessed Trinity.

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Abbreviations.

CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CA	Centesimus Annus
CL	Christifideles Laici
CT	Catechesis Tradendae
DV	Dei Verbum
EN	Evangelii Nuntiandi
FC	Familiaris consortio
GDC	General Directory of Catechesis
GS	Gaudium et Spes
LG	Lumen Gentium
RM	Redemptoris Missio
SC	Sacrosanctum Concilium
VS	Veritatis Splendor
R.	Reading.

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Prelude.

‘They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons;
they poured out innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and daughters,
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan;
and the land was polluted with blood.’ (Ps 106:37-38)

‘Thus says the Lord God:
Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations,
and raise my signal to the peoples;
and they shall bring your sons in their bosom,
and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.’
(Is 49:22)

‘Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord:
Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall become like wool.’ (Is 1: 18)

In the light of the Church claiming children killed before birth and their prophet and martyr witness through the Church to the world, the Benedictus is particularly relevant both for the children and for those who have been involved in the killing of the children:

‘Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel!
He has visited his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up for us a mighty saviour....

A saviour who would free us from our foes,
From the hands of all who hate us.....

As for you, little child,
You shall be called a prophet of God, the Most High.
You shall go ahead of the Lord
To prepare his ways before him,....

To make known to his people their salvation
Through forgiveness of all their sin,
The loving-kindness of the heart of our God....

He will give light to those in darkness,
Those who dwell in the shadow of death,
And guide us into the way of peace.’ (Lk 1:76ff)

Abstract.

When one considers that a conservative estimation of the annual abortion figure world-wide is approximately forty-six million one can begin to comprehend the sheer size of this global problem. The use of modern abortifacient drugs such as the morning-after pill, the widespread use of contraceptive drugs, I.V.F. treatment and the exploitation of embryos through scientific research, are together the cause of many more unrecorded deaths. Countless numbers of men and women - parents of the children, hospital staff, medical agencies and abortion clinics, doctors, nurses, and social workers etc. - whether conscious of it or not, are in some way involved or affected by abortion and the killing of embryos through medical experiments and procedures. In many countries abortion has become socially acceptable. It may be that many people do not recognise terminating the life of the unborn child as a serious moral issue or as an issue of justice which concerns the fundamental human rights of the child in the womb. The question must inevitably be asked, is enough being done to address this problem and to correct moral attitudes in individuals and society towards the unborn child in the womb and the dignity of the human person?

There is also another problem linked to the moral issue of abortion, namely the theological question concerning the salvation of those who are killed. In the Christian tradition human life is sacred and to be respected and defended, because it is a gift from God. Redeemed through Jesus Christ, it forms the basis of eternal life. Traditional Catholic teaching does not explicitly provide an explanation for the way of salvation for children who die without baptism. This means there is ambiguity over the eternal life of those who have been unjustly deprived of life.

Coinciding with these increased attacks on human life is the emergence of a private revelation in England that is deeply concerned with this aspect of abortion. Sadly, England has become known as the abortion capital of the world with legislation allowing procured abortions first passed in 1967 and which set the precedence for other countries to follow suit. At the heart of this inspiration is a request to the Church's Magisterium to consider all children killed before birth as companion martyrs to the first Holy Innocents of Bethlehem. Objections could be raised to the proposal, notably the biblical testimony regarding the necessity of baptism for salvation (Cf. Jn 3:5), the fact that the children do not seem to fit into the typical understanding of a martyr, and the debate over the exact moment of ensoulment. Yet, the deeper and more serious problem remains: can we leave the salvific fate of these children in ambiguity without undermining in the minds of people the definitive victory of Christ over all sin and death?

There is however a positive case to be made for declaring the children's martyr status. If proclaimed as such they not only witness to the truth 'Thou shalt not kill' but also to the human personhood of the unborn child, created and loved by God and redeemed by Christ and claimed for Him and His Church. For the Magisterium to proceed and claim the children for Christ and His Church would require a profound theological deliberation, drawing upon both Scripture and Tradition to develop the Church's understanding in this matter. Such a proclamation would certainly arrest world attention; it would raise awareness of the seriousness of the abortion issue, it would bring reconciliation and healing to many people involved in the deaths of the children and would both inspire and require catechetical initiatives on behalf of the Church's missionary role in the world.

Introduction.

This study will attempt to demonstrate that the Catholic Church, from the sure foundation of Divine Revelation and with the aid of newly discovered insights, could proceed with a positive doctrinal development regarding the eternal fate of children killed before birth (by abortion, or scientific and other medical procedures) which the Catholic Church considers contrary to the divine, natural and moral law. This thesis will attempt to show that the successor of Peter and the Magisterium have a firm theological basis from which to exercise the authority given to the Church by Christ, to proclaim all children put to death before birth as martyrs, ‘companions of the first Holy Innocents’. The recent charism of Divine Innocence shows that there is solid theological support for such a move in sacred Scripture and Tradition. Those theologians who have studied the inspirational material springing from this charism believe that the Church is being shown a way of salvation for the children killed before birth and with it a unique opening for on-going missionary outreach towards those directly involved in the children’s deaths and many other peoples. The claiming of these children by the Catholic Church would refute the evil of abortion and fundamentally undermine the attacks against the personhood of the child in the womb. A development of this nature effectively supplies a way to universally call all those involved in the children’s deaths to repent and believe in the Gospel of Life.

In this study theological questions which may arise from such a formal proclamation by the Church will be considered and important doctrinal issues at the heart of this question will be addressed. Key issues that need to be considered are the necessity of baptism, how the children are included in God’s plan of salvation and how they can be considered martyrs? According to Catholic theology, infants even in the womb, who are killed in *odium fidei* or hatred of the faith, may be regarded as having undergone a baptism of blood. While this could be proved subjectively for some individual children, it could not be valid for the vast number of children put to death before birth. All of these children have died because of a widespread culture of death and denial of objective truth.

The question therefore we wish to raise here is whether aborted children and those killed in scientific experiments, contrary to the Commandments and the teachings of the Catholic Church, can be shown to be ‘supernaturally included within the embrace of divine redemption, to the point that the Church, by a solemn act, could declare publicly their martyr

status, and invite their intercession.’¹ The evidence put forward will demonstrate that a solemn liturgical act of claiming these children for Christ and His Church is in keeping with the Church’s understanding of the liturgy as an action of Christ the Priest and of His Body, which is the Church.² I hope to show that by its very nature such an act would constitute an initial proclamation of the Gospel of Life and provide a powerful witness of the Christian message to every nation. A formal act of such magnitude would present the Church with an unprecedented opportunity for evangelization and catechesis of millions of people not only in the area of life issues but in many other areas of Catholic Christian doctrine, faith and morals. A public liturgical act of this nature would therefore have important theological and missionary implications in the Church and for the whole world.

I will strive to show that through the Church claiming these children as her own she will witness to the Church’s role as universal Mother and to her mission of bringing God’s saving love to all people. The Church herself states: ‘Proclamation is the permanent priority of mission. The Church cannot elude Christ’s explicit mandate, nor deprive men and women of the “Good News” about their being loved and saved by Christ.’³

Chapter one will briefly consider the present situation regarding abortion and how it has come to be accepted as a normal practice in society today. We will look at the arguments commonly used in favor of terminating the embryo in the womb and the policy of the destruction of embryos in the name of scientific advancement. In this chapter we will look at the vast scale of abortion world-wide through procured abortion and abortifacient drugs, but also increasingly through experimentation on embryo children, the use of human foetal material in fertility treatments, therapeutic procedures to find cures for diseases and even attempts at cloning.

The original legislation for legalising abortion will be looked at and how more and more language itself is being misused in such a way that

¹ Nichols Aidan. O.P. (ed) *Abortion and Martyrdom*. (‘Setting the question.’) England: Gracewing, 2002. Page 4. This book brought together a collection of papers which were submitted by theologians from several different countries to a Consultation held at St. Peters Abbey, Solesmes, France in 1999. Participants were asked to consider; ‘Can the Magisterium of the Church acknowledge children killed in abortion as ‘companions of the Holy Innocents’ (and therefore martyrs)? The Consultation was initiated and arranged by the Divine Innocence movement, Surbiton, England and Fr. Philippe Jobert O.S.B. of St. Peters Abbey, Solesmes. It was co-chaired by Fr. Jobert and Fr. Aidan Nichols. All contributors were given a dossier of inspirational material from the charism.

² C.f. Vatican II. *Sacrosanctum concilium*, (hereafter SC) The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*. St. Paul Editions, U.S.A., 1975.

³ John Paul II. Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Missio*, (hereafter RM). CTS Publications London, 1990. n. 44.

conceals the real nature of abortion, which is the killing of innocent children e.g. the use of the term “reproductive health” which initially conceals abortion as a family planning technique. This study will consider the often hidden though serious effects of abortion on women and in society. An overview will be taken of how the Catholic Church’s teaching confronts the ‘culture of death’⁴ and her response to life issues which involve attacks on the dignity of the human person such as induced abortion and embryo experiments.

Chapter two will consider the new insights that have been brought to the Church’s attention by the charism of Divine Innocence. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that ‘[e]ven if Revelation is already complete, it has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith gradually to grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries.’⁵ This chapter will therefore look at the background to this charism and will consider generally the role of private revelation in the Church; what contributions it can make to help understand and live out our faith more fully, without treating it with suspicion, prejudicial or premature judgement but with a discernment based on rational enquiry and open theological debate. The insights coming from the above charism have directly resulted in theological studies and debate regarding the fate of children killed before birth. A consequence of this was a theological consultation held at St. Peters Abbey, Solesmes, France, in 1999, which considered this issue as raised by the contents of the above charism and its proposals. Since then, further theological work regarding this and related issues have been presented to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. This offers clarification for the theological basis for the Catholic Church to claim these children as ‘Companion Martyrs of the First Holy Innocents.’

In his Homily on the Eve of Pentecost 2004, John Paul II spoke of ecclesial movements as being the “providential answer”, “inspired by the Holy Spirit, given the present need of new evangelization.” Speaking directly to those in the Church he said, “Open yourselves with docility to the gifts of the Holy Spirit! Receive with gratitude and obedience the charisms that the Spirit does not cease to offer! Do not forget that all charisms are given for the common good, that is, for the benefit of the whole Church!” It will be in keeping with the Church’s understanding of the role of private revelation and charisms and in obedience to her final decision, that this inspiration and the theological material developed from it will be drawn upon.

⁴ Term used in Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, (hereafter EV). CTS Publications London, 1995. n. 12.

⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (hereafter CCC). Veritas, Dublin, 1995. n. 66.

Chapter three will consider the theological objections which may arise from the Catholic Church proclaiming the martyrdom of children killed before birth. This theological debate stems directly from the question: can the Magisterium of the Church recognize children killed by abortion and other means as martyrs, companions of the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem? If the reply is affirmative, it follows that these child victims are sharers in the divine glory in Heaven. The question of the need for baptism must however be resolved in the case of these children. How could these children, who by definition have been unable to receive Baptism in the ordinary way, enter into the glory of which the grace received at Baptism is the necessary condition? These and other theological questions arising from claiming these children will be considered in this chapter and possible objections to this development will be addressed.

In chapter four I will consider the positive case in favour of the Church claiming these children and proclaiming their martyr status. The Church considers the issue of children who die before baptism an important theological issue. We see that on the 7th of October 2004, Pope John Paul II asked the International Theological Commission⁶ to look into the question of children who die without Baptism (of which the children killed in abortion and embryo experiments are a huge proportion). At that time the Pope told the Commission that this issue involves the saving Will of God, the definitive victory of Christ on the Cross and other areas of doctrine. In considering how such children are included in God's plan of salvation will inevitably bring to the fore the doctrinal issue of original sin and the necessity of baptism. The Commission put forward their findings in 2007 and these will be considered later.

In considering the positive case the question is asked: If the fullness of the law of love is to be found in Jesus Christ, (Rom 13:10) then can these children who have been denied the opportunity for water baptism through no fault of their own, be held under the bondage of the law regarding baptism? Could their baptism be a baptism of blood? The children are victims of other people's sins but have not committed actual sin themselves. If we are to understand as *Evangelium Vitae* states, 'Nothing is definitively lost' (EV 99), then how are these children included in God's saving plan? "Thou shalt not kill" is the truth about life, this commandment has been broken with regard to the children. In the positive case for these children it can be shown that the children witness to this

⁶ John Paul II's request to the International Theological Commission to look into the 'Matter of Children who Die Without Baptism: A Nagging Question.' 7th Oct. 2004, Reported by: Zenit News Services. The World Seen from Rome, Date: 7th Oct 2004 (Code: ZEO4100703) (Zenit.org)

truth with their lives. Looked at in the light of Divine Love (Jn.1. 4:16) these children cannot be excluded from God's plan of salvation but fully included in it and their martyr witness can be shown to be, through the universal Motherly role of the Church, a mission to their own peoples and to all nations. These issues will be examined in more detail in this chapter.

Chapter five will consider the mission of the Catholic Church in regard to this area asking what are the catechetical implications of the Church proclaiming the children killed before birth as 'Companion martyrs of the first Holy Innocents'? This is in terms of the children's prophetic role to witness to the truth which would be facilitated by the Church, in the context of initial proclamation, evangelization and catechesis.

The murder of millions of innocent children and their eternal fate should not be treated merely as an interesting and speculative theological point. It is a serious issue not only because of the countless numbers of children who have died and still continue to be killed. Every child that dies has two parents and there are countless other people involved in the deaths of these children. The Catholic Church has a solemn responsibility with regard to the eternal destiny of the souls of those who need to be called to repentance and are in urgent need of evangelization. The question of the children's salvation is also significant because it touches on many areas of doctrine which are interlinked. The theology in this presentation shows how the children are included in God's plan of salvation and how the Catholic Church, as part of her apostolic mission, a mandate received directly from Christ, can claim these children for Christ and His Church as 'companion martyrs of the first Holy Innocents'.

Finally, my conclusion will be a synthesis of the findings from the different areas of this study and their catechetical implications.

Chapter One: Setting the Scene.

Abortion and embryo experiments and their effects.

Induced abortion is the deliberate termination of pregnancy by removal of the foetus from the womb. There are different horrific procedures⁷ all of which terminate an innocent baby's life.⁸ The total number of procured abortions world-wide is estimated to be in the region of forty six million per year. The figure in reality is much higher as there are many "clandestine" abortions not reported.⁹ Added to this is the huge rise in the use of the Morning after Pill and the French abortifacient drug RU 468.

At the turn of the last century abortion was illegal in England as it had been according to the common law of the land from the earliest centuries.¹⁰ Society recognised that abortion was not morally permissible and the civil law for many centuries upheld this belief. Abortion was also illegal in order to protect women from unsafe medical procedures. However, in the latter half of the twentieth century exceptions were gradually introduced and in 1967 abortion was legalised in England and Wales allowing the conceptus to be aborted up to twenty eight weeks of the gestation period. Further modifications to the law, with the Health Services Act in 1980 and the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act in 1990, allowed the destruction of a deformed foetus up to full term and experimentation on human embryos up to fourteen days after fertilisation. The Abortion Act of 1967 in effect set a legal precedent for other countries world-wide to follow suit and legalise abortion.¹¹ 'The proponents of the abortion law in Britain insisted successfully that abortion be allowed not simply for therapeutic purposes but also for social reasons,'¹² this

⁷ Appendix III, page 190

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Kletschka Harold D. M.D. *A Treatise on Human life – An Unalienable Right*. St. Paul, MN, U.S.A.: Alethos Press LLC. 2003. Pages II, 5-78. Early records from the reign of King Ethelbert who ruled as King of Kent from 560 to 616 A.D. and was baptised by Augustine in 597 show that when he became king he established with the consent of his counsellors a code of law inspired by the example of the Romans (the Empire having become Christian after Constantine). The first of his laws was to protect those persons and doctrines he had embraced. This Catholic Tradition clearly condemned abortion. Its teaching was based on biblical revelation eg. Jer 1:5; Ps 22:10-11 and also included authoritative denouncements of abortion eg. The Didache 2,2. or The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles written between 60 and 90 A.D. (sources Chretiennes, 248,148; Paris 1942, Page 547) states 'You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish.' Successive English Kings continued to uphold these ordinances.

¹¹ Appendix III, page 191

¹² Bristow Peter. *The Moral Dignity of Man..* Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1993. Page 16; C.f. Farmer, Ann. *The Language of Life*. (Grounds for Abortion Act 1967) UK: St. Paul's, 1994, pages 59 – 60.

happened also in other countries. We find the emphasis being placed on a woman's 'right to choose' either to keep or kill her baby and which has come to be accepted in the public arena as a valid justification for abortion. Yet the child's right to life is ignored.

Corporate involvement in the death of children.

Where fifty million children have been killed by abortion, twice that number of parents are also involved. Family members and friends of those who have abortions are often personally involved. Doctors, nurses, hospital staff and those who work in abortion clinics as well as scientists involved in embryo experiments are also implicated. Politicians and others who have passed legislation and laws in order to facilitate these killings directly contravene the natural and moral law. (CCC n. 2272 ff.) There is an urgent need for a serious missionary outreach to all these people.

Dangers to the health of women.

In addition to the attack on the children themselves, many abortion procedures are dangerous to women and can cause distressing medical problems.¹³ A report by the Mother and Child Campaign in Ireland has highlighted the harmful effects of induced abortion. Most women are never informed of the very serious risks associated with induced abortion. The International Family Planning Association and the Marie Stopes Clinics say that women should be allowed to make an "informed choice" about abortion. It is questionable however; if women really are informed when it is obvious that the physical and psychological damage to women from abortion is not disclosed.¹⁴ Abortion can harm a woman's present and future health, the direct effect of a so called "safe legal abortion" can result in the puncture of the uterus, bladder or bowel and can cause excessive bleeding, infection and possibly even death. Following an abortion in the Los Angeles Planned Parenthood abortion clinic, Diane Lopez, age 25, died February 28 in Los Angeles, California. The LA Coroner's office found she had "bled to death after her cervix was punctured during an abortion."¹⁵ Abortion can also seriously affect the future fertility of a woman as well as being linked to a significant increase in the risk of contracting breast cancer.¹⁶

¹³ *Women have a Right to Know, Adverse Effects of Induced Abortion*, A Report by the Mother and Child Campaign, 60a Capel Street, Dublin 1, Ireland, 2004.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, page 6 ff.

¹⁵ *Ibid*. A Summary, page 2

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

Reasons given for abortion and the use of human foetal material.

Many reasons are given for abortions and to justify the use of human foetal material in medical and therapeutic procedures. It may be discovered that the child in the womb is handicapped or has a 'so called' genetic fault and so termination is often prescribed as the best solution. Scientists argue that they need human foetal material for medical experiments, to find cures for conditions such as Parkinson's disease etc. Human foetal material is sold to medical research establishments and hospitals.¹⁷ Abortion is often recommended for rape victims, although we see that Pope John Paul II asked the women in Bosnia who had suffered in this way not to abort their innocent unborn child but to heroically make a statement for life.¹⁸

On a more global scale abortions are encouraged in countries as a means of population control. In some countries such as China and Tibet, women are forced against their will by state policies to have abortions with terrible physical and emotional results. For example the following is a press release by Tibetan women who travelled to the U.N. Beijing Conference of a report of an eyewitness account of the work of Chinese mobile birth control teams in Tibetan villages in 1987. It states: "The villagers were informed that all women had to report to the tent for abortions and sterilizations or there would be grave consequences. For the women who went peacefully to the tents and did not resist, medical care was given. The women who refused to go were taken by force, operated on, and given no medical care. Women nine months pregnant had their babies taken out.... We saw many girls crying, heard their screams as they waited for their turn to go into the tent, and saw the growing pile of foetuses build outside the tent, which smelled horrible. During the two weeks of this mobilization, all pregnant women were given abortions, followed by sterilization, and every women of childbearing age was sterilized."¹⁹

In India girl children are not valued as much as boys because of the cultural tradition and the burden of families having to find a dowry for girls who wish to marry. Because of this obstacle female babies of poor families are sometimes abandoned and left to die. On an international level abortion is causing a disturbing decline in national birth rates in many countries resulting in populations that are falling below replacement

¹⁷ Appendix: III; 'Baby parts for sale', page 193.

¹⁸ John Paul II. *Letter addressed to Archbishop Vinko Pulijik of Sarajevo, with a message to Bosnian Muslim Women who had been raped in the conflict in that country.* Zenit News Agency, 1993.

¹⁹ O'Leary Dale. *The Gender Agenda. Redefining Equality.* USA: Vital Issues Press, 1997. Page 9.

levels.²⁰ The drop in the birth rate has resulted in fewer and fewer young people having to support an ageing population in some countries. This is particularly so in western developed nations such as Italy and Spain, which have high rates of contraception and abortion. The paradox is that poorer countries, on the other hand, generally have a high rate of population growth, which is difficult to sustain because of low economic and social development. At the international level, intervention to help countries in the form of monetary aid from the World Bank and other loan institutions often comes with the condition to implement population control policies; contraception, sterilization and abortion.²¹ The absurdity of this is such that ‘Kenyan doctors have reported having closets full of condoms and cases of IUD’s provided by Western donors, but no latex gloves for surgery or simple antibiotics.’²²

An anti-birth worldview prevails in many countries and it seems to take precedence over what is often really needed; serious social and economic family policies, programmes of educational and cultural development and the encouragement of fair trade in the production and distribution of resources. Huge international bodies such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have been instrumental in promoting abortion and contraception at the highest international level and have organised world conferences with these agendas firmly in mind e.g. the UN Conference on Population in Cairo in 1994 and the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Population policies imposed on third world countries can be directly related to directives set at these and earlier conferences.²³ Abortion is clearly actively promoted universally as having a central role in population control policies.

The use of language in order to introduce anti life agendas.

We see today that with social reforms at political and international levels language and its interpretation is a key area that is being targeted for the purpose of imposing agendas and to help condition people’s perception of what is right and wrong. Pope John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* n. 58

²⁰ C.f. Cuddeback Kateryna Fedoryka. “Population control: the global contours of the culture of death”. Article included in *Culture of Life – Culture of Death*. Gormally Luke. (ed) London: Linacre Centre, 2002. Page 71.

²¹ Pontifical Council for the Family, *Ethical and Pastoral Dimensions of Population Trends, in Serving the Human Family*. (The Holy See at the Major UN Conferences. New York: The Path to Peace Foundation 1997: 753, par. 89) See also *Culture of Life - Culture of Death*. Page 85; ‘Population control and violation of rights.’

²² Ibid, page 47.

²³ Cf. *The Gender Agenda. Redefining Equality*. Chapters 3, 4, 13 & 17.

states: ‘Especially in the case of abortion there is a widespread use of ambiguous terminology, such as “interruption of pregnancy”, which tends to hide abortion’s true nature and its seriousness in public perception. Perhaps this linguistic phenomenon is itself a symptom of an uneasiness of conscience.’ (EV n. 58). Medical, government and legislative bodies are manipulating language in such a way as to conceal attacks upon innocent life. For example, the termination of the life of a human embryo is referred to simply as ‘a therapeutic procedure.’ Another term which is widely promoted today and found in the wording of many policy papers at international level is “reproductive rights”. This term would seem to refer to the right of persons to reproduce i.e. to have a baby which in itself is a good and wholesome thing, but in fact the opposite is the case and understood as the woman’s right to abortion, to choose to kill her baby.

Family planning and health programs.

Very often family planning and health programs are in fact a cover for rejecting children. They facilitate the means for terminating pregnancies through contraceptive abortifacients and procured abortion. Scans and tests are offered to mothers to determine if the child is healthy, but if deformity is found, abortion is offered as if it were a therapeutic remedy. We see that ‘as early as 1966 the Ministry of Health in Britain held that family planning education was ‘a most important part of health education.’ The [birth control] campaigners gradually brought the representative bodies, such as the British Medical Association, the General Medical Council and the Royal Colleges, which were anti-birth control until well into the century, round to their viewpoint.’²⁴ As part of an anti-life mentality the ‘close connection which exists between the practice of contraception, eg., the morning after pill and that of abortion is becoming increasingly obvious’. (EV n.13) The various techniques of artificial reproduction, which seem to be at the service of life and which are frequently used with this intention, actually open the door to new threats against life.²⁵ Also ‘[p]renatal diagnosis, which presents no moral objections²⁶ if carried out in order to identify the medical treatment which may be needed by the child in the womb, all too often becomes an opportunity for proposing and procuring an abortion.’ (EV n.14)

Many western governments subsidise medical research which encourages experiments and procedures such as stem cell research carried out on both live and dead embryos. Body parts of children are collected and sold to

²⁴ *The Moral Dignity of Man*. Page 16.

²⁵ Cf. *Donum Vitae*, nos. 70-102.

²⁶ *Donum vitae* nos. 1, 2.

medical establishments for experimentation.²⁷ With more and more medical exploitation on embryos taking place, countless numbers of unborn children die. The children's right to life and the dignity of their personhood is completely disregarded. In these so called therapeutic procedures such as invitro fertilization 'the number of embryos produced is often greater than that needed for implantation in the woman's womb, and these "spare embryos" are then frozen, destroyed or used for medical research which are presented as scientific or medical progress. These procedures reduce human life to the level of simple "biological material" to be freely disposed of.'(EV n. 14)

Following the cloning of a human embryo by Korean scientists announced in the publication "Science"²⁸, Professor Gian Luigi Gigli, M.D., president of The World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations issued a statement stating that, "It is not acceptable to deliberately sacrifice the life of any human being, even if this is done in order to relieve the health problems of other human beings." In this particular procedure the Korean scientists collected 242 female eggs, from which they succeeded in cloning 30 blastocysts (early stage embryos) and from these they harvested just one colony of viable stem cells.²⁹ On May 20th 2005 it was widely reported in the British media that a group of British scientists made a celebratory announcement that the cloning of a human embryo had been achieved in Britain also!

The danger to handicapped children.

'It is often claimed that the life of an unborn handicapped child or a seriously disabled person is only a relative good: according to a proportionalist approach...' (EV n.68) This has serious utilitarian connotations; a person is valued only for what they can do and their usefulness to society rather than their worth as a unique person made in God's image. We find that the availability of more advanced medical equipment such as ultrasound technology, instead of being used only to save life, is often used to condemn the child in the womb to death if deformities are found. Mothers of Downs Syndrome children, for example, are freely offered and indeed encouraged to have abortions. We see that sadly in society today attacks against the child in the womb 'can

²⁷ Appendix III; 'Baby parts for sale', page 193.

²⁸ Details of the research are published online by the journal Science, on its Science Express website <http://www.sciencemag.org>.

²⁹ The World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations. Statement published on Zenit News Agency Dated 2004-02-26.

be done with total freedom and indeed with the free assistance of health-care systems.’(EV n. 21)

With some insights into the causes and effects of abortion and the destruction of embryos we are lead to ask the question what really is behind this ‘culture of death’(EV n. 12)? What is the philosophy or ideology that conditions a culture to sacrifice so many innocent lives? It seems that there is no simple answer but a combination of many reasons, the effects of worldviews, state policies, human ignorance, fear and selfishness, disobedience to the natural law, poverty, and ultimately a rejection of God, and His Commandments written on every human heart.³⁰ Inevitably, we are faced with the reality of original sin, and the struggle between the forces of good and evil,³¹

A summary of the Church’s teaching on right to life issues and her response to the culture of death.

The Catholic Church’s position regarding abortion, embryo experiments, the dignity of the human person and the right to life has been clear from the earliest records of the Church’s teaching. The Church established by Christ and founded on the Apostolic tradition teaches that “[h]uman life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.”³² The Church has been very consistent over the centuries in her condemnation of abortion and the taking of innocent human life.³³ From the Church’s beginnings the killing of the innocent has always been condemned, as something contrary to Divine Revelation; “You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the new-born to perish”.³⁴ Tradition shows that during ‘Christianity’s two thousand year history this same doctrine has been constantly taught by the Fathers of the Church and by her Pastors and

³⁰ Cf. Jer 31:33: ‘But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.’

³¹ C.f. Ephesians 6:12.

³² CCC n. 2270; Cf. *Donum Vitae* n. I, 1.

³³ CCC n. 2261: ‘Scripture specifies the prohibition contained in the fifth commandment: "Do not slay the innocent and the righteous." The deliberate murder of an innocent person is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human being, to the golden rule and to the holiness of the Creator. The law forbidding it is universally valid: it obliges each and everyone, always and everywhere.’

³⁴ C.C.C. n. 2271; Didache 2,2;Sch 248,148;cf. Ep. Barnabae 12, 5;Pg 2, 777: Ad Diognetum 5, 6; PG 2, 1173; Tertullian, Apol.9: PL 1,371.

Doctors.³⁵ Even scientific and philosophical discussions about the precise moment of the infusion of the spiritual soul have never given rise to any hesitation about the moral condemnation of abortion. (C.f. EV ns. 50, 61) The Church insists that this doctrine is based upon the natural law and upon the written Word of God; it is transmitted by the Church's Tradition and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium.³⁶ 'God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes'. (GS. n. 51 § 3)

The Catholic Church teaches that '[f]rom the first moment of its existence, a human being must be recognised as having the rights of a person' (CCC n. 2270). However, while the Church does not definitely state that the embryo is a human person from the moment of conception; she teaches that the embryo must be treated as such, 'defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.' (CCC n. 2274) God creates the human person in a relationship of love, with a living soul united to a human body. What the Church teaches about human dignity she draws from Divine Revelation. The biblical narrative reveals that man is made in God's image and that God's relationship with man is one of love and friendship. Man receives his dignity from his Creator, the Trinitarian God; "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"[...] 'male and female he created them.' (Gen 1: 26, 27)

The life God endows the human person with, is a gift by which God shares something of Himself with his creature. Man alone is capable of knowing and loving his Creator: 'He filled them with knowledge and understanding, and showed them good and evil.' (Sir 17:7) The life which God bestows upon man is much more than mere existence in time. 'For God created man for incorruption, and made him in the image of his own eternity.' (Wis. 2:23; EV n. 34) Speaking of the great dignity God has bestowed upon man, the Psalmist says: 'You have made him little less than a god, and crowned him with glory and honour.' (Ps 8:5) We come to realise how great must be the value of human life when the Son of God

³⁵ C.f. Among the Greek ecclesiastical writers, Athenagoras records that Christians consider as murderesses women who have recourse to abortifacient medicines, because children, even if they are still in their mother's womb, "are already under the protection of Divine Providence."(n.63) (Apologia on behalf of the Christians, 35: PG 6, 969)' (E.V. n.61) 'Among the Latin authors Tertullian affirms: "It is anticipated murder to prevent someone from being born; it makes little difference whether one kills a soul already born or puts it to death at birth. He who will one day will be a man is a man already."(n.64) (Apologeticum, , IX 8: CSEL. 69, 24)' (E.V. 61)

³⁶ C.f. EV nos. 62 - 73; Cf. Vatican II. *Lumen Gentium*, (hereafter LG). Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II. St. Paul Editions, U.S.A., 1975.

Himself has taken it up and made it the instrument of the salvation of all humanity. (Lk 23:46; EV ns. 33-35)

Apart from stressing the gravity of breaking the natural and moral law, the Church in her documents and especially in the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, largely confronts this issue by positively proclaiming the dignity of the human person and the importance of upholding every person's right to life. Throughout the documents of Vatican II we see again and again emphasis on the dignity of the human person, a dignity which has been exalted in virtue of Christ. In *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II's document on the Life of the Church in the Modern world, paragraph n. 22 states: 'by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man.' Further on in paragraph n. 27, we read: 'everyone should look upon his neighbour as another self...', 'God the Lord of life has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life' while 'abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.'³⁷ John Paul II reiterates this teaching in his Encyclical on the Gospel of Life, *Evangelium Vitae* which states: "by the authority which Christ conferred upon Peter and his Successors, and in communion with the Bishops of the Catholic Church, I confirm that the direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being is always gravely immoral.

This doctrine, based upon that unwritten law which man, in the light of reason, finds in his own heart (cf. Rom 2:14-15), is reaffirmed by Sacred Scripture, transmitted by the Tradition of the Church and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium." (EV n. 57)

New advances in bioethics such as experimentation on embryos inside and outside the womb have given the Church cause for grave concern. In 1985 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued *Donum Vitae*, 'Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation.' This document was produced to clarify the Church's position on different moral questions confronting the faithful. It 'puts forward, by virtue of its evangelical mission and apostolic duty, the moral teaching corresponding to the dignity of the person and to his or her integral vocation.'³⁸ While showing an openness to new advancements in medical science the document reiterates Pope Paul VI's warning to the U.N in 1965 of "the temptation [for man] to go beyond the limits of a reasonable dominion over nature".³⁹ This text also states that: 'science and technology

³⁷ Vatican II. *Gaudium et spes*, (hereafter G.S). Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*. St. Paul Editions, U.S.A., 1975. n. 51.

³⁸ Vatican II. *Dei Verbum* (hereafter DV). Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*. St. Paul Editions, U.S.A., 1975. n.1, Introduction.

³⁹ Ibid.

require, for their own intrinsic meaning, an unconditional respect for the fundamental criteria of the moral law... they must be at the service of the human person, of his inalienable rights and his true and integral good according to the design and will of God.’ (DV n. 2) *Donum Vitae* draws attention to the ‘unified totality’ of the person, the fact that the human person is a unity of body and soul and that it is only ‘on the basis of this anthropological vision’ (DV n. 3) that medical decisions aimed at improving health, should be made. Throughout this document emphasis is laid on the respect due to human life from the moment of conception and ‘no one can in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being.’ (DV n. 5) It recalls the teaching of the *Declaration on Procured Abortion*; “From the time that the ovum is fertilised, a new life is begun which is neither that of the father nor of the mother; it is rather the life of a new human being with its own growth.”⁴⁰

With individual freedom being forwarded as a dominant issue in society today, many feel that they have the right to make a free choice regarding the right to life of the unborn child irrespective of the child’s rights. On this point, *Evangelium Vitae* states: ‘broad sectors of public opinion justify certain crimes against life in the name of rights of individual freedom, and on this basis they claim not only exemption from punishment but authorization by the State, as is seen in the legalization of abortion [and cloning].’⁴¹ In *Veritatis Splendor*, Pope John Paul speaks in depth about the concept of human freedom and how that freedom is misunderstood by many today because it is only understood in a subjective sense without regard to objective truth. Subjective freedom cannot take precedence over the moral law since it is God “who commands us to respect the natural order and forbids us to disturb it”⁴².

John Paul II also voices his concern that daily new scientific and technological progress provides openings for new forms of attack on the dignity of the human being. A cultural climate is developing which give crimes against life a new and ‘even more sinister character’ (EV n. 13). Referring to the Church’s missionary responsibility, Pope John Paul II reminds the ministers of the Church of St. Paul’s words to Timothy; “Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke,

⁴⁰ Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration on Procured Abortion*. London: CTS Publications, 1990, ns.12 & 13.

⁴¹ EV. n. 13; Also see *Donum Vitae* n. 3: “The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law. When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined. [...] As a consequence of the respect and protection which must be ensured for the unborn child from the moment of conception, the law must appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child’s rights”.

⁴² VS n. 43; Saint Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, Bk 22, Chap. 27.

and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching,” (2 Tim 4:2) John Paul II says that the Church ‘must use appropriate means to defend the faithful from all teaching which is contrary to [the Gospel of Life].’ (EV n. 82) For this to happen effectively the Church’s catechesis needs to reach people and engage with them at all levels of society.

We have presented in this chapter an overview of the present situation of abortion, its causes and effects. We have looked briefly at the Church’s magisterial documents and her catechetical teaching to help us understand how the Mother Church is trying to safeguard the flock from the ‘culture of death’ while at the same time calling others to the truth. However, we find that despite this verbal instruction and some excellent magisterial exhortations, the statistics seem to show that rather than the attacks on human life diminishing, they are increasing in variety and number. The question must inevitably be asked if the doctrine that is contained in these documents is really reaching the hearts of people at pastoral level? It seems that the Church’s condemnation of the killing of the unborn is widely known but the more fundamental philosophical and theological reasons for the dignity and sacredness of human life from conception to natural death are not understood both in and outside the Church.

In Easter week 1991, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the then Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, addressed an Extraordinary Consistory of Cardinals who met in Rome to discuss the question of abortion. Referring to the Church’s past ‘position statements’ and ‘numerous pontifical addresses on these problems or on their particular aspects’ (the issue of abortion and associated ‘culture of death’ issues), the Cardinal said that ‘the field remains wide open for a global restatement on the doctrinal level, which would go to the deepest roots of the problem and denounce the most aberrant consequence of the ‘death mentality’.⁴³ It leads us to ask if the Church should take a more pro-active stance in this moral issue in terms of her missionary role.⁴⁴

The focus up to now both in the Church and in this thesis has been on the moral condemnation of the killing of the unborn. The issue also raises important theological questions regarding the status and eternal destiny of

⁴³Ratzinger Cardinal Joseph. *Human Life Under Threat*. London: CTS Publications, 1991.

⁴⁴ Cf. Speaking generally about opposing moral evils such as abortion, J.J. Scarisbrick who co-founded the pro-life movement LIFE, states that it “requires heroic prophecy. Constant, heroic prophecy. We have learned that we must do more than simply refute our opponents: we have to take the initiative, challenge the world head-on”. Article titled, ‘The pro-life cause in great Britain: reflections on success and failure, on the Church’s record and the present challenge.’ Gormally Luke. (ed) *Issues for a Catholic Bioethic*. London: The Linacre Centre, 1999, page 307.

these children killed before birth. The Church's teaching is a seamless garment doctrinally and morally. The salvation of these children is not ancillary to the problem of abortion but vital to the proclamation of a 'culture of life'.⁴⁵ Regarding these theological questions the charism of Divine Innocence has a positive contribution to make which we will now examine in more detail

⁴⁵ Cf. EV Chapter II, section 29,34

Chapter Two. The Charism of Divine Innocence.

Before looking at what contribution the charism of Divine Innocence can make to the question of abortion and the eternal fate of children killed before birth, it is necessary at the outset to consider the role of private revelation in the Church. Speaking of private revelation, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph no. 67 states: 'It is not their role to improve or complete Christ's definitive Revelation, but to help live more fully by it in a certain period of history. Guided by the Magisterium of the Church, the *sensus fidelium* knows how to discern and welcome in these revelations, whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church.' Referring to charisms, in its section on 'The People of God' *Lumen Gentium*, in paragraph 12 states, 'These charisms, whether they be the more outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation for they are perfectly suited to and useful for the needs of the Church. [...] judgement as to their genuinity and proper use belongs to those who are appointed leaders in the Church, to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good (cf. Th. 5:19-21).' A phrase that is used in the inspiration of Divine Innocence, which seems to capture the relationship between private and public Revelation says that this message is 'a greater light of the Holy Spirit on public Revelation.'

More recently the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, when he was Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in a theological commentary to *The Message of Fatima* states, 'In every age the Church has received the charism of prophecy, which must be scrutinised but not scorned'.⁴⁶ Referring to the role of private revelations he states that they can 'help us to understand the signs of the times and to respond to them rightly in faith.'⁴⁷ We know from history that the signs of the times are most often associated with the needs of the times. The problems associated with abortion and embryo research cover many pastoral needs for both the children killed before birth and those involved in their deaths. The killing of these children is one of the greatest corporate sins in the history of mankind involving millions of human beings in need of pastoral care. This pastoral care is the responsibility of the Church in her mission to the nations.

⁴⁶ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *The Message of Fatima*. (Theological Commentary of Cardinal Ratzinger, section titled, 'Public revelation and private revelations – their theological status.')

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

The charism of Divine Innocence began in 1984, and was received by a married woman, Patricia de Menezes living in Surrey, England whose own Christian back ground began in the Salvation Army. As a young girl she also attended the Baptist church, the Anglican Communion and finally entered the Catholic Church via marriage to a Catholic. The inspiration takes the form of interior locutions, visions and a dialogue between the members of the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph and the recipient of the inspiration. It touches upon many different areas of the faith, in particular the fate of all children killed before birth and how they are part of the plan of salvation. It also reveals a deeper knowledge of the theology of the Holy Family and its relevance for the lives of all men and women in what is called 'The Novitiate of the Holy Family'. This shows how the Holy Family is the foundational Christian family from where we learn a deeper understanding of the roles of Catholic men and women to nurture and protect the life of Christ in ourselves, in others and in our particular vocation. We learn to make our lives and families Christ centred and strive to be Christ-like. It is from Christ, Our Lady and St. Joseph that we are to learn the divine order of our roles from within the Holy Family itself.

The inspiration which has been given since 1984 to the recipient, explains the different aspects of the new theology and how it accords with Catholic teaching. The inspiration material itself and the theological clarifications drawn from it by a number of theologians have been submitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for its decision.⁴⁸ In *The Message of Fatima* the then Cardinal Ratzinger points out that what is important in regard to judging private revelation is the 'actualization of the definitive Revelation' and its 'orientation to Christ.'⁴⁹ The content of this charism clearly shows this 'orientation to Christ' and its associated theological development seeks the 'actualization of the definitive Revelation.'

In 1998 the key themes and insights in the inspiration were sent to all the participants of a theological consultation arranged by the Divine Innocence foundation at Solesmes Abbey France in the late summer of 1999. The result was a book printed in 2001 titled, *Abortion and Martyrdom* (Edited by Aidan Nichols, O.P.) which contains a compilation of the individual papers of the theological opinions of theologians who

⁴⁸ Dossiers of theological clarifications and their updates; Fr. Francis Frost, Professor at Ars Diocesan Seminary, France; Fr. McCarthy, Superior of the Oblates of Wisdom, Rome and Fr. Philippe Jobert, O.S.B., St. Peters Abbey, Solesmes, France, have each been submitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith between 1993 and 2005.

⁴⁹ *The Message of Fatima*. Theological Commentary of Cardinal Ratzinger, section titled, 'Public revelation and private revelations – their theological status.'

submitted their work to the consultation. The publishing of *Abortion and Martyrdom* in 2001 encouraged theological debate on these issues, but since then Father Philippe Jobert OSB, professor of dogmatic theology and philosophy at Solesmes Abbey, who co-chaired the consultation, has further developed the theology stemming from this charism and has submitted his findings to the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith.⁵⁰ Father Jobert has worked closely with the Divine Innocence foundation in England for over 13 years to help clarify many theological points and to show how it is in accordance with Catholic doctrine. The openness of Solesmes Abbey to new theological insights has kindly facilitated Father Jobert to carry out this work.

One of the themes of the charism of Divine Innocence is the request to the Church to proclaim the martyrdom of all children deliberately killed before birth and to raise them to the Altar of the Catholic Church as ‘Companion Martyrs of the First Holy Innocents’. Widely referred to in the charism as ‘the claiming,’ it is a request to the Pope and the successors of the Apostles to carry out a solemn liturgical act of ‘claiming’ these children for Christ and his Church.⁵¹

In accord with the Church’s tradition the canonization of saints is carried out by the Supreme Pontiff usually after a person’s life has been examined and found to contain nothing contrary to faith and morals. In the case of the aborted children however their cause is introduced via a theological investigation in the doctrine of the claiming. It seeks to show that they are in the embrace of salvation via martyrdom rather than an actual investigation into their lives. Traditionally miracles are not required for martyrs.⁵² Also, the Pope may dispense some of the formalities usual in the canonization process, as can be seen from the recent moves to canonize Pope John Paul II. The Pope makes the formal declaration of canonization. The charism points to the liturgical feast of the Holy Innocents as an appropriate feast for companion martyrs of the first Holy Innocents and since this feast day is already in place no new feast day needs to be established for these new martyr saints.

⁵⁰During an audience with Cardinal Ratzinger in October 2004 Fr. Jobert submitted a dossier of his work and in April 2005 soon after the election of the Cardinal to the Papacy a further dossier of recent work was submitted to His Holiness.

⁵¹ The word ‘claiming’ will be used hereafter to describe the proclamation of the martyrdom of all children killed before birth.

⁵² *Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia*, Editor, Rev. Peter M.J. Stravinskis, PH.D.,S.T.L. Our Sunday Visitor Books Huntington, Indiana 46750 1991 Section on Canonization, pages 64 -66.

The inspiration also shows that there is no other ‘universal motherly body’⁵³ but the Catholic Church with the authority with theological and canonical mechanisms in place to embrace these children as her own. The Catholic Church believes in the one Saviour who in the claiming would be proclaimed to all nations as Saviour and Lord. She preaches the one perfect Sacrifice, the Holy Lamb of God who offered Himself on Calvary to the Father for the sins of all mankind, the same Sacrifice that is perpetuated in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass every day throughout the world. The Catholic Church has been given the authority by Christ to St. Peter and the Apostles and their successors continued through the Pope and Bishops of the magisterial Church to provides for the authentic development of doctrine based on Christ’s definitive Revelation.

The charism puts forward that the claiming would be a sign and a signal⁵⁴ to the nations, a liturgical act that proclaims to the world that Christ has conquered all sin and death even with regard to these children. The Church would ratify for the peoples understanding, what Christ has already achieved in the children, that they are included in God’s saving plan via martyrdom and washed in the blood of Jesus and their own blood. As St. Augustine states in one of his sermons, ‘How could the martyrs conquer, unless Christ conquered in the martyrs?’⁵⁵ The children’s martyr-witness announced world-wide would proclaim to all those implicated in the deaths of these children the evangelizing invitation to ‘Repent and believe in the Gospel.’ (Mk 1:15) As an example of the inspirational content of the charism, I quote here part of a message given to the recipient on the 25th July 1992, Jesus speaks:

“St. John the Baptist leapt for joy in the womb at My Coming! These little ones have been martyred in the womb because the truths and teaching of the Church were disobeyed or not known. But I came for them also. These are the ones spoken of in the Gospel: “He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John” (Lk 7:28). These little martyrs, martyred in the womb, have witnessed with their blood to the truth and the great Commandment, ‘Thou shalt not kill’. I too was a victim of those who broke this Commandment! Will I forget these little companions of

⁵³ Cf. CCC ns.171&181.

⁵⁴ Cf. Isaiah 49:22: “Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my signal to the peoples and they shall bring your sons in their bosom, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.” Also relevant is Isaiah 49 20-21 from which may be asked if the Church is being asked to make room for these children to dwell in as part of her mission to the nations?: “The children born in the time of your bereavement will yet say in your ears: ‘The place is too narrow for me; make room for me to dwell in. Then you will say in your heart: ‘Who has borne me these? I was bereaved and barren, exiled and put away, but who has brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; whence then have these come?’”

⁵⁵ St. Augustine. Sermon 329; ‘*Precious is the death of the martyr bought with the price of the death of Christ.*’ Divine Office, Office of Readings. First Reading from the Common of One Martyr. (English Edition) Collins, London.1974. Page 580*.

mine? I tell you again, they died in the Blood of My Crucifixion, their innocence crucified. Their death and martyrdom, when claimed by the Church as true martyrdom, will be a mighty force against the evil of abortion. ..." Once claimed by the Church the whole world will see that they are fully part of the Communion of saints and can ask for their intercession."

Over the years both in the inspiration itself and in the accompanying theological work there has been an ongoing development and clarification of this request to the Church's Magisterium to consider these children martyrs. The inspirational material will again be referred to when considering the theological and doctrinal questions arising from the Church claiming these children, particularly in relation to any objections which may be raised.

Chapter Three. Theological questions and possible objections.

First Objection.

The Church teaches that man through the fall of his first parents has the stain of original sin. No sin can enter heaven. These children are not baptised by water baptism at the font. How then are they washed of original sin so that they can enter heaven?

The Church professes three forms of baptism; by water, blood and desire. If it is not possible for an individual to receive baptism by the normal means i.e. by water, the same benefits can be supplied by “baptism of blood (whereby martyrdom is suffered for Christ, the Catholic Faith or for some virtue) or by “baptism of desire” (whereby a person has perfect contrition and at least the implicit intention of fulfilling God’s will for man’s salvation.)⁵⁶ The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: ‘The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ.’ (CCC n. 1258) We see that this Baptism of blood, like the desire for Baptism, brings about the fruits of Baptism. The Catechism also teaches that ‘God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.’ (CCC n. 1257)

The source of all forms of baptism flow from God’s love and the purpose of universal salvation. Jesus is the manifestation of God’s love⁵⁷ that love is shown particularly in his passion and death where He died for love of all mankind. We must remember that this includes these children. Jesus speaks of his suffering as a baptism. Baptism for us is a share in the fruits of Christ’s passion, death and Resurrection. Father Jobert OSB, working from the content of the charism, shows the link between God’s love for these children and a Baptism of Blood with regard to the children. The wording of Our Lord in the charism states: “They are baptised in the blood of My Crucifixion.”

‘Above all, they receive the baptism of love through a Baptism of Blood, which unites them to Christ Crucified. They are killed for the divine Truth about life, which is printed in every human soul, and revealed in the Decalogue: “Thou shalt not kill”. They are martyrs [martyr means witness] to the Gospel of life;

⁵⁶ *Our Sunday’s Visitor Encyclopedia*. Section titled Baptism pages 45-48.

⁵⁷ C.f. 1 John 4: 9-10: ‘God’s love was revealed among us in this way: ‘God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.’

for human life is the necessary receptacle of the gratuitous gift of eternal life, according to the divine purpose of Love for mankind.’⁵⁸

The children’s baptism therefore is a ‘Baptism of Love through a baptism of blood.’ St. Paul says in Romans 6:3:4: “all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” The children have been united with Christ in their death through suffering⁵⁹; ‘For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.’ (Rom 6:5) It will be considered in more detail later how the children are united to Christ in suffering like His and how they are conformed to Christ in their deaths.

St. Augustine says, “The Blessed Cyprian argues with considerable reason for the thief to whom, though not baptised, it was said: “Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise” that suffering can take the place of Baptism. Having weighed this in my mind again and again, I perceive that not only suffering for the name of Christ supplies for what was lacking in Baptism, but even faith and conversion of heart, if perchance on account of the stress of the times the celebration of the mystery of Baptism is not practicable.”⁶⁰ We know that the thief, who died with Christ, did not willingly give his life for Christ or the faith but he was in direct contact with Christ the Sacrament. The thief asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his Kingdom. It is also interesting to note that the good thief witnessed to the innocence of Jesus. “[T]his man has done nothing wrong.” (Luke 23:41) One might suppose that Jesus who remembered a sinful thief and extended to him the promise of paradise, would remember also the millions of innocent children who have not committed any actual

⁵⁸ See Appendix I. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence* by Father Philippe Jobert, O.S.B.; Paper titled: ‘Theological arguments for the martyrdom of children killed before birth.’ Page 107

⁵⁹C.f. Excerpt taken from message from the inspiration dated 5th June 1995. Jesus refers to part of St. Augustine’s Sermon no. 329 of the Divine Office, Office of Readings, Common of One Martyr, ‘Precious is the death of the martyr bought with the price of the death of Christ’: Reading. ‘What is that cup? It is the cup of suffering, bitter, and yet bringing salvation, the cup that a sick man would fear to touch if his physician did not drink it first. This is that cup. We recognise that cup on the lips of Christ when he says, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.’ Jesus. “What more bitter cup could these little ones have drunk than to be killed in the womb by their own parents and unfeeling and evil people? Yet if the Church would only claim them, their salvation is there for all to see. Let the elders of the Church recognise the cup of salvation on the lips of these children and babes!”

⁶⁰ De Unico Baptismo Parvulorum, iv.

sin and like Christ have 'done nothing wrong', do they not have a solidarity with the innocent Jesus Crucified?

John 1:33 reveals that Jesus is the one who is said to baptize with the Holy Spirit. "I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." In the Acts of the Apostles Jesus tells the Apostles "you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:4-5) The New Testament does not tell us that the Apostles received water Baptism but Jesus does tell us that they were baptised by the Holy Spirit. In John's Gospel Jesus refers to those born of the Holy Spirit saying "The wind blows where it wills,"⁶¹ The aborted children while unable to receive water baptism at the font are not outside the Spirit's reach; "For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free and we were all made to drink of one Spirit..." (1 Cor 12:13)

We are told that 'St Thomas Aquinas observes, importantly, that babies in their mothers' wombs 'can nevertheless be subjected to the action of God, in whose presence they are living, in such wise that they achieve sanctification by some privilege of grace, as is evident regarding those who have been sanctified in the womb.'⁶² The cases of Jeremiah (Jer: 1:5) and of St John the Baptist (Lk: 1:15) show that God can freely sanctify by grace a child in the womb of His mother. The similar case of Mary is a dogma of faith: viz. the Immaculate Conception.'⁶³

To summarise the answer to this objection, the Church teaches the necessity of baptism which supplies God's grace so as to overcome original sin. Baptism flows from God's love for us, manifested in Jesus Christ principally through his passion, death and resurrection and is the work of the Holy Spirit. Revelation testifies to God's gift of gratuitous grace so that all men can come to the knowledge of the truth and are saved. The will of the unborn child presents no obstacle to this grace for its free will is not yet operative it is however ordered to natural good.⁶⁴ They are deprived of the normal sacramental means of baptism yet the manner of their death is a baptism of blood. For like the Holy Innocents

⁶¹ John 3:8: "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit."

⁶² Aquinas, S. Th., III. Q 68, art. 11, ad 2; Quoted in a paper titled "On whether aborted children should be claimed as members of the Church?" McCarthy F. John. Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Rome. Paper submitted to the Solesmes Consultation 1999 and included in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 8 ff.

⁶³ See Appendix I. Jobert, Philippe Fr. 'Holy Innocents in our times', pages 100

⁶⁴ Cf. We see this in a child seeking its mothers milk, responding to love, turning to its good and nourishment.

they die as innocent victims and witnesses to Christ, the Truth⁶⁵, the truth in the Scriptures and to the truths and teachings of the Church.

Second Objection.

'Children cannot be considered martyrs because they do not knowingly and willingly embrace death rather than deny Christ.'

The Church's traditional understanding of martyrdom is that the martyr is conformed to Christ and witnesses to Him and the faith; 'Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith. The martyr... bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine.'⁶⁶ This not only encompasses supernaturally revealed truth but truths of the natural moral law. This was the case with saints such as Maria Goretti and John the Baptist who are both martyrs: they were not killed *in odium Christi*, but as witnesses to moral principles.⁶⁷ 'The Church's proclamation of aborted children as martyrs despite their incapacity to willingly offer their lives is of course, not without precedent. Is this not evident in claiming them as companions of the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem?'⁶⁸ What is important here is that in the understanding of the Church martyrdom has itself developed and we see examples of that development.

We find that the question concerning the children's martyrdom centres on our understanding of subjectivity and objectivity in the theology of martyrdom;

'We cannot use only the subjective likeness to Christ of these children as innocent persons as proof of martyrdom, to be objective we must also look for this proof elsewhere. St. Augustine wrote (PLS2, 425): "If Christ is Truth, whoever is condemned for truth suffers for Christ, and a crown is due to him." These words concern St. John the Baptist, who was beheaded for the divine truth about marriage. More recently St. Maria Goretti and several other virgins were canonised as martyrs for chastity.'⁶⁹

The children witness to the word of God, to the truth of the Commandments; 'Thou shalt not kill'. Many of these children are conceived in adulterous situations; 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' The fatherhood and motherhood of those involved in abortion has been

⁶⁵ John 14:6: Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.

⁶⁶ CCC n. 2473.

⁶⁷ Harrison Brian, O.S Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico. "Aborted infants as martyrs: are there wider implications?" Paper submitted to the Solesmes Consultation 1999 and included in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 103.

⁶⁸ Michele M. Schumacher, University of Fribourg, Switzerland. "The martyr status of the aborted child: a share in Christ's witness to the Father of mercies." Paper submitted to the Solesmes Consultation 1999 and included in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 73.

⁶⁹ See Appendix I. Jobert, Philippe Fr. 'Holy Innocents in our times', page 100.

dishonoured by parents themselves and by society (through legislation etc.); ‘Honour your father and mother,’ The lives of these children have been stolen from them by unjust laws and by others who have killed them; ‘Thou shalt not steal’. ‘Thou shalt not bear false witness’; the false witness of the world against these children is the cause of their deaths, a world that legislates to kill them, that says they are not human persons, and does not recognise their dignity as made in God’s image or the right to life that God has given them. In all these areas the children witness to the word of God that has been broken in their regard and to the truth. Because of what the mystery of the Incarnation means for every member of humanity, the children witness to Christ the Word made flesh, to Christ the Sacrament: “What you do to the least of my brethren you do to me.”(Mt 25:40)

At a more fundamental level the active participation of the martyr is a grace from God acting in the martyr to conform them to Christ the proto martyr. It is not only the martyr’s choice for Christ but Christ’s choice of the martyr through His grace to witness to a particular truth. This is shown in Jesus’ words in St. John’s Gospel, “You did not choose me I chose you.” (John 15:16) We know that God’s power is shown forth in human weakness. He chooses the weak and makes them strong in bearing witness to Him. (cf. 1Cor 1:27,28). These children could be considered the weakest members of society. Pope John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* n. 58 says: ‘No one more absolutely innocent could be imagined. [...] He or she is weak, defenceless, even to the point of lacking that minimal form of defence consisting in the poignant power of a newborn baby’s cries and tears.’

In death these children are conformed to the death of Christ as witnesses to divine truth. Christ indeed gives testimony in them and dies in them. ‘By their martyrs’ deaths they become members of the Mystical Body of the Christ who hallows them. They are sanctified not out side but within the Church. She is their Mother, not by the sacrament of Baptism, [of water at the font] but by proclaiming that they are her glorious children through the Baptism of blood. She gives their blood a voice to proclaim the truth of God about life, the glory of the mercy of God and the power of the Blood of Christ.’⁷⁰

Those who end the life of the unborn break the divine law written in their hearts, and so objectively these unborn are rendered victims, although they do not have any opportunity of choosing to die for the truth about life. ‘This objectively confers on their death the formal notion (*ratio formalis*)

⁷⁰ Ibid.

of martyrdom.’⁷¹ The Holy Innocents were killed by Herod, who wanted to kill Christ: formally Christ was martyred in each of them. They were witnesses to Christ as Messiah by their blood, without any possibility of willing it. The new holy innocents ie. all children killed before birth, are martyr victims in a similar way.

Third Objection.

The children could exercise their free will against God and reject Him.

The children are too young to have the use of their free will, since they have no way of exercising it, it is potential. They have not the use of this freewill anymore than they have the use of their lungs. In any case the Church teaches that children below the age of reason are not considered responsible. Christ said that he who is not against him is with him. (Mk 9:40) When a child is brought to the font for Baptism in the ordinary way, there is no suggestion, that the child might be harbouring resistance toward Christ in its will and rejecting the sacrament. All children have been created by a loving God and are orientated to the good, their supreme good is God. God does not create evil or human persons with any evil intent; ‘Since God is perfectly good, He cannot be the direct cause of any evil.’⁷² St. Thomas Aquinas in his Summa said that ‘Children before the use of reason do not have an inordinate act of the will, neither will they have one after death’⁷³

The very fact that the children cannot exercise their will shows that their martyrdom is unique and this is because

‘[N]ot yet having the use of their freewill, they are under God’s direct motion in their natural will for happiness. Thus Christ takes them into His Crucifixion when they are killed. Living in them through grace, He offers them in His own offering to the Father and they share in His Sacrifice for all sinners. They are perfect instruments of Christ’s charity: this complete instrumentality is completely identified with Christ’s martyrdom and witness: this is the highest level of martyrdom because it is a glory only for Christ through them [the children] and with them as human persons.’⁷⁴

Fourth Objection.

By claiming these children, it could encourage abortions if people thought that their child would become a saint. It may be argued that it would be

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Stravinskias Peter M.J, (ed). *Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopaedia*. Huntington, Indiana, USA: Our Sunday Visitor Inc. 1991. Article titled ‘Evil’, pages 377-378.

⁷³ Aquinas, De Malo, q. 5 art. 3 corp.

⁷⁴ See Appendix I, *Theological Clarifications* Paper titled “Certainties regarding the fate of children killed in the womb.” Page 121

better to kill the child rather than bring it into the world where it might suffer such things as poverty and sickness.

Catholic moral theology teaches that it is never lawful, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil that good may come of it. St. Paul clearly rejects this way of thinking and from his Letters it seems he had to refute this type of argument a number of times. In Romans 3:5-8 we read: ‘But if our wickedness serves to show the justice of God, what shall we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) By no means! For then how could God judge the world? But if through my falsehood God’s truthfulness abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? And why not do evil that good may come? - as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.’ Also in Romans 6:1-4 we read: ‘What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?’ This counter argument is again repeated in Romans 6:15-2.⁷⁵

To kill an innocent child so as to make heaven available to that child or to save it from coming into this world where it might suffer, is an evil act regardless of any good motive. Many reasons are given in society for the killing of the children and most are presented as having good motives. This does not change the fact that it is an intrinsically evil act to kill the innocent. To say that claiming the children will encourage abortions seems unreasonable when one considers the sheer scale of abortions and the effectiveness of methods of murdering the children (eg. RU468), it seems little encouragement is needed.

In *Veritatis Splendor* n.80, Pope John Paul II states:

‘Reason attests that there are objects of the human act which are by their nature “incapable of being ordered” to God, because they radically contradict the good of the person made in his image. These are the acts which, in the Church’s moral tradition, have been termed “intrinsically evil” (*intrinsece malum*): they are always and per se, on account of their very object, and quite apart from the ulterior intentions of the one acting and the circumstances [. . .] seriously wrong...’⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Hebrews 10:26 is even more explicit in condemning this error: ‘For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgement, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries.’

⁷⁶ Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (2 Dec. 1984), 17: AAS 77 (1985), 221; cf. Paul VI, Address to the Members of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, (September 1967): AAS 59 (1967), 962: “Far be it from Christians to be led to embrace another opinion, as if the Council taught that nowadays some things are permitted which the Church had previously declared intrinsically evil. Who does not see in this the rise
Footnote continued on next page

The Second Vatican Council confirming the respect due to the human person, gives explicit examples of such acts: “Whatever is hostile to life itself, such as any kind of homicide, genocide, abortion, euthanasia and voluntary suicide;...” (GS n. 27)

Fifth Objection.

There are too many children to claim. The Church could instead claim one child of whom it could be proved that it died in “odium fidei” to represent all the other children killed before birth. [An example of this would be that a certain baby was killed because it was a Catholic.]

All humanity was not too many for Christ to die for and to save so why would the children be too many for the Church to claim if Christ has justified them? If one child can be claimed surely all can be claimed. Claiming all the children preserves privacy; no individual mother, child, or family need be made known. Without excluding any children it also does not exclude anyone who has been involved in the deaths of these children. The claiming would therefore touch all those involved in this corporate sin with the light of truth because the Commandments are written upon the human heart. The Church by claiming these children and raising them to the Altar, universally proclaims the truth that Jesus is Saviour of all mankind and the Church is the one place where the saving Sacraments are available for those involved in abortion and experiments on children so that they can be completely reconciled with God

Jesus in the Gospel rebuked those who would stop little children coming to Him. “Suffer the little children to come unto me, forbid them not for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Mat 18:2). Jesus did not say “Suffer one child to come to me to represent all other children.” The one child approach is a subjective approach; it is on a lower theological level which fails to give the glory to God.

‘Martyrdom is exclusively a gratuitous gift of Christ, the giving of Himself as the King of martyrs, to continue His witness to divine Truth, in and through all unborn children. There is no place for an exception, either on the part of Christ, or on the part of the children, who themselves are conformed to His likeness in death and bear witness to the truth about life. This martyrdom is universal in itself, for it is a participation of all children in Christ’s martyrdom. This universality of salvation and martyrdom in the case of unborn children is so essential, that to look for an individual case of martyrdom in one child who is killed in abortion “*in odium fidei*”, would completely miss the point. In such a singular case, the universal salvific

of a depraved moral relativism one that clearly endangers the Church’s entire doctrinal heritage?”

Will of God and Christ's martyrdom are not taken into account. The charism of martyrdom is reduced to the human level and to the exceptional human conditions of the violent death of one person only: and the glory of martyrdom would be received by this person, not by God's Mercy and Christ Crucified alone.⁷⁷

Sixth Objection.

'You are asking the Church to claim children who would be killed in the future.'

In reply to this objection Our Lord in the inspiration referred to Revelations 6:9-11: 'When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; they cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?" Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren should be complete, **who were to be killed as they themselves had been.**' [my emphasis.]

This passage speaks of those who have been slain for the word of God and of their witness to the word. It also speaks of those who would in the future be killed as they themselves had been. These children who can be said to wear the white robe of innocence have been washed in the blood of the Lamb and they witness to the word of God that has been broken in their regard.

When the children's martyrdom is publicly proclaimed those who kill these children will come to realise that the children are martyred because of disobedience to the divine and natural law. It will have the effect of discouraging further abortions because all will know without doubt that those who kill the unborn child create a martyr and that their actions (for which they are answerable before God) are the cause of this martyrdom.

These children as a category of martyr do not require the same canonical process for there is no life to investigate so to speak, only the theological and doctrinal criteria for them to be numbered among the white robed army. If we have ascertained the objective criteria for these children as a body to be considered within the embrace of salvation so as to be claimed for Christ and His Church as martyrs to the truth, what obstacle is there for future children in the same category to be considered as such?

⁷⁷ Fr. Philippe Jobert O.S.B. 'Post scriptum; Can the Magisterium of the Church acknowledge children killed in abortion as companions of the Holy Innocents and therefore as martyrs?' Paper included in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 1034

Seventh Objection.

'You cannot prove a child in the womb receives grace.'

The creation of these children is a grace from God. God does not create the child and then abandon it.⁷⁸ There is evidence in Scripture that grace can reach the child in the womb. The Prophet Jeremiah was consecrated in his mother's womb. (Jer 1:4-5) St. John the Baptist leapt for joy in the womb of his mother when she was filled with the Holy Spirit. (Cf. Luke 1:39-45; V.S. 61) Joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit and the action of the child proves the cause of the joy, God's sanctifying Spirit. St. Paul tells us that even in his mother's womb he was given his mission (Gal 1:15) which was a grace. Scripture also reveals that God has no favourites (Rom 2:11) so there is no reason why these children can not receive grace in the womb. It may be asked, is it sufficient grace? St. Paul was told by the Lord "My grace is sufficient for you." (2 Cor 12:9). God does not give insufficient grace for salvation. It is also Church teaching for *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22 states:

'Since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partakers, in a way known to God, of the Paschal mystery.'

It seems that the Church is being shown how these children are partakers in that mystery.

Eight Objection.

'We do not know when the soul is present therefore the Church cannot claim all children killed before birth'.

The question of ensoulment is important because there are those who feel that if the soul is not present at conception it is acceptable to experiment on living human beings in the early stages of their development, although we see that children are killed at every stage of development.⁷⁹ There are many who argue that the child in the womb is not a person but a cluster of cell tissue and therefore children before birth can be killed or used for scientific experiments, they deny the presence of the spiritual soul of the child. Our Lord in the inspiration refers to a "gap"⁸⁰ in the present

⁷⁸ The heresy of Deism.

⁷⁹ See Appendix III, page 190

⁸⁰ From the inspiration, a message dated 15th December 2000: Jesus: "It is in the gap that evil spirits are coming up from hell to kill the children. Close the gap! It is in this gap that many doctors turn their skills to killing rather than healing. In this gap where is the Hyprocratic Oath? There are those medical men and women who do not set any limits to appease their particular god, "diabolical science" and their sacrificial victims mean nothing to them. These people use sweet sounding words to carry out their diabolical work, ultimately they will render an account!"

doctrine in which legislators, doctors, scientists etc. justify their killing of embryos.

The strongest scriptural evidence for the presence of the soul at conception is Our Lord's conception and 'he is like us in all things but sin (Heb 4:15). Added to this is the doctrine of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception i.e. her soul was also present at her conception. The Church teaches that human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception, that is from the first moment of his or her existence, and to be recognized as having the rights of a person, of which life is the inviolable right of every innocent being.⁸¹ From the early centuries the Church has upheld the unity of man's body and soul stating that 'it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul'. (CCC n. 364) Because of this unity the soul does not pre-exist the body⁸² and this is also true for the converse. Referring to living things with the power to grow and develop Aristotle speaks of two aspects; 'matter' and 'form', the latter being the animating principle. Drawing upon this philosophy the Catechism in paragraph n. 365 states: 'The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the 'form' of the body i.e. it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living human body: spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their unions forms a single nature.'

St. Thomas Aquinas understood that since matter and form are so complementary, it is not possible for the soul to be present in matter that was insufficiently organised i.e. in matter that is not already human. For this reason based on the scientific knowledge of his day, St. Thomas understood ensoulment to take place some time after conception. However, with the contribution of modern science and the discovery of the human genetic code, we know now that there is a perfect organisation of the zygote at the moment of conception and so St. Thomas who followed Aristotelian philosophy would also have maintained this view.

The Church may need to make a more definite pronouncement regarding the soul being present at conception. God's relationship with the human person is a person to person relationship of love, a relationship with the whole person in a unity of body and soul.⁸³ It is the whole person, body and soul who is saved by Christ, according to the Will of the Father in the

⁸¹ CCC. n. 2270; Cf. CDF, *Donum vitae* I, 1.

⁸² Pre-existentialism was rejected by a Synod at Constantinople (543) against the Origenists, and by a Synod at Braga (561) against the Priscillianists. Denz. 203,236.

⁸³ GS n. 14: 'Man though made of body and soul, is a unity': Also Pope John Paul II: 'Man is 'an incarnate spirit... a soul which expresses itself in a body and a body informed by an immortal spirit' a 'unified totality'; Encyclical Letter, *Familiaris Consortio* n. 11.

Unity of the Holy Spirit. For this Trinitarian relationship of love with the human person made in God's image, the soul must be present at conception. In his *Theological Clarifications* Father Jobert sheds some light on this issue:

'Modern science has shown that from the first moment of conception, from the union of both male and female elements, the program of development of the organs, and the beginnings of these organs are present. Thus, at the same moment the perfection of the creating Cause, Divine Love, and the complete dispositions of the subject, shows that the spiritual soul is present as a formal cause of the body from the first moment of conception. The purpose of the efficient Cause, Divine Love, is the communication of its image, as spiritual, at the same level as this image is in the procreating cause of the person.....

The doubt of Aristotle in this matter comes from his theory of the form springing from the potentiality of the matter. In this way, it is not possible to reach in generation a form, which transcends the potentiality of the matter, i.e. a spiritual soul, with immaterial potentiality of intellectual and voluntary operations. St. Thomas Aquinas follows [Aristotle] but the philosophical demonstration of a First Cause, a Prime Mover who is a Prime Lover dissipates the Aristotolean doubt: **the Prime Mover can produce a spiritual soul at the moment of conception, and the Prime Lover will produce it as the proper effect of His Love: the communication of His likeness.**⁸⁴ [our emphasis]

If the Magisterium were to claim these children killed before birth, the wording of such a pronouncement would be important to overcome the above objection. It would have to identify as martyrs all those created by God, in His image and likeness and killed before birth. If this was done it would not be necessary to define the exact moment of each individual conception. It must also be remembered that these children are raised to the altar as a body such as the Holy Innocents and the First Martyrs of the See of Rome where particular individuals were not known but their witness was still acknowledged.

Ninth Objection.

What of children who die naturally such as children who die through miscarriage?

In this study we are not dealing here with all children who have died before baptism. We are dealing specifically with a particular group of children deliberately put to death before birth. If the martyrdom of these children is accepted, as an authentic witnesses to the truth and the dignity of human life, a doctrinal way is then established to show that they enjoy

⁸⁴ See Appendix I. Jobert, Philippe Fr. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*. Paper titled: 'The Philosophy of Divine Love.' Page 145.

the fruits of salvation through a 'baptism of love' and blood. It is the purpose of this work to demonstrate that these children can be considered martyrs and from this the pastoral issue of reaching those who have been responsible for the children's deaths. This development however will help to shed light on the theological question of miscarried children. While it is an important question for those who have been affected by miscarriage, it does not present the same pastoral urgency as for those who have been involved in the killing of children. Many more children are in danger of being put to death and those involved in wilfully putting the children to death are in grave sin and are in need of being reconciled to God and the truth taught by the Church.

Miscarried children have not died at the hands of others contrary to God's law. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: 'Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which caused him to say: 'Let the children come to me, do not hinder them' (Mk 10:14; cf. 1 Tim 2:4), allows us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. (CCC n. 1261) Perhaps these words will provide some consolation to those parents who have lost children through miscarriage who also need pastoral care from the Church. The Charism of Divine Innocence draws the distinction between the children put to death before birth who are called 'virgin martyrs' and to children who die naturally before birth as 'virgin souls,'

Tenth Objection.

'What about other innocent children who have been killed after birth such as street children in South America who have been murdered as a means of dealing with a social problem, can one differentiate?'

A court deals with each case individually, the Church likewise does not mix up causes going forward for beatification, each having their own individual context and circumstances. Each case needs to be looked at on its own merits. Regarding children killed before birth, there are certainties in their regard, they cannot receive sacramental baptism, they are innocent of actual sin but have the stain of original sin. This cannot be said with certainty of all children who have been killed after birth who may vary greatly in ages. The freewill of the children killed before birth is only potential and having no merit of their own; in their helplessness they are utterly dependent on Christ's merits, on His saving Blood to cleanse them

from original sin and to sanctify them by His Spirit.⁸⁵ With other children differing circumstances have to be considered, such as determining the age of reason, innocence and the subjective cause of death. It may be so that many of these children are candidates for beatification but this is for the Church to decide separately from this cause.

On this same issue and included in her paper in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, Michele M. Schumacher states:

‘[T]he Church’s intervention would, it must be admitted open the same possibility to other truly innocent victims of violent crimes – children who have not reached the age of reason and the mentally handicapped, for instance – victims whose blood, when offered by the Church with that of Christ, might truly ‘speak more graciously than the blood of Abel’ (cf. Heb. 12:24) to convict the consciences of those responsible for the violent taking of their lives thereby allowing for the penetration of the graces of conversion for all those involved in the horrendous crime of abortion. On the other hand, given the magnitude of the crime of abortion and the obscuring of public’ conscience in its regard, there is, it seems to me, a certain urgency which would advocate their cause at this moment in history even before that of other truly innocent victims.’⁸⁶

Eleventh Objection.

The children go to Limbo therefore there is no need for the Church to claim them, they enjoy a natural happiness.

Although it was never defined as a dogma of faith the existence of limbo was posed as a possible answer by some theologians wrestling with the question of children who die without Baptism.⁸⁷ The fate of children who die without baptism has been looked at within the Church by many theologians over the centuries, some of whom put forward the theory of ‘Limbo of the infants.’ ‘Limbo was suggested as an intermediary place between heaven and hell, which spared the innocent who died without

⁸⁵ ‘Those who bring to an end the lives of children before their births voluntary transgress this divine law so aborted children are made into victims in all objectivity,’ Fr Jobert, *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 123.

⁸⁶ Schumacher Michele M., “The martyr status of the aborted child: a share in Christ’s witness to the Father of mercies.” Included in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 63.

⁸⁷ [T]heologians have established this notion, not from Revelation, but from reasoning; which was based on the necessity of baptism, and on the freedom of assent to faith, exclusively. Having no use of freewill, no possibility of being baptised, the children who die in the womb of their mother cannot receive grace and go to heaven. Having not committed any actual sin and being deprived of grace only by original sin, they are not condemned to hell. Limbo is neither heaven nor hell; only a negative concept, not a reality. See Fr Jobert, Appendix I. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*. Paper titled: “Objections to the claiming of children killed before birth as martyrs”, page 134.

baptism from the punishments of hell.’⁸⁸ The theory states that the children who die without baptism do not enjoy the beatific vision of God but only a natural happiness.

Christ came to bring us supernatural happiness and show us the way to the Father. ‘The Church [has] treated the doctrine of limbo and the denial of limbo simply as “opinions” of theologians; she has been content with her decision to the present day’⁸⁹, but there is now a rethink. Also, it seems significant that the New Catechism of the Catholic Church does not mention the existence of Limbo. Instead it tells us that, ‘Jesus’ tenderness toward children which caused him to say: ‘Let the little children come to me, do not hinder them’, allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism.’ (CCC n. 1261).

If we are to accept the theory of Limbo, this invariably means, that those who have killed the children, if they repent and were reconciled to God and his Church, would have the opportunity to reach heaven and enjoy the Beatific Vision of God, while their victims, the innocent children, are denied the beatific vision for all eternity. This does not seem to be compatible with God’s justice, mercy and love.

When the children die and come before God for their particular judgement, they have no actual sin to expiate so Purgatory is not applicable for them. They have not committed any sin and do not reject God, so they cannot be sent to Hell. If we accept that limbo would not be a just solution the Church teaches definitively only one other destination, heaven.

The Limbo theory is theologically inadequate to answer the fate of unbaptised infants within the context of the Father’s saving Will: ‘The theory of limbo ‘limps’ because it relies upon divine Justice only, and not upon Justice and Mercy together. God is at the same time Justice and Mercy: so there is never divine Justice without Mercy’ (Ps 88:15)⁹⁰ Fr. Jobert believes that for children who are killed in abortion, there is a previous action of Christ’s Mercy for them: ‘He united them to His own Martyrdom, as witnesses for the Gospel of Life. They are martyrs in Him and are consequently glorified in Him.’⁹¹ ‘The children killed before birth are martyrs in Christ, because Christ exercises his own martyrdom in

⁸⁸ John Paul II’s request to Catholic theologians to study the question of the fate of children who die without baptism. Zenit News Agency – The World Seen From Rome, Code: ZE4100703. Oct 7th 2004.

⁸⁹ Dyer, J. George. *‘Limbo, unsettled Question.’* USA: Sheed and Ward, Inc, 1964, page 89.

⁹⁰ See Fr Jobert, Appendix I. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence.* Paper titled: “Limbo, No”, page 129.

⁹¹ Ibid.

them, out of his Mercy and Justice, all objections are destroyed; because they are formulated as though Christ is not living any more, as though his sacrifice is not eternalised by his Divine Act of Being and present to the children, as though his Mercy forgets these children and is not powerful enough to save them.’⁹²

Father Jobert makes an important point regarding the Covenant and Limbo: ‘God is the Prime Lover in the Covenant, the first effect of the Covenant is prevenient grace: In our first parents, [i]n the Immaculate Conception [and] [i]n the martyrdom of unborn children. ‘The theory of limbo forgets and neglects the Covenant. Through abortion the devil tries to undermine the Covenant.’⁹³

The International Theological Commission called by Pope John Paul II in 2005 published a document in 2007 regarding Infants who die before baptism said, “The conclusion of this study is that there are theological and liturgical reasons to hope that infants who die without baptism may be saved and brought into eternal happiness....”⁹⁴ The same document repeatedly refers to the *sensus fidelium* – the sense of the faithful – to illustrate how Christians increasingly reject the idea that the vision of God would be denied to innocent babies. This was an important reason for the failure of attempts to get Vatican II to teach that unbaptised infants are definitely deprived of the vision of God.

In this chapter we have answered key objections which may be raised against this theological development. The refutations put forward will help build a positive case for the Catholic Church to claim the children put to death before birth and to raise them to the Altar as companion martyrs of the first Holy Innocents. Cardinal John Henry Newman pointed out the importance of the ‘antecedent argument’ in the process of the development of doctrine⁹⁵ and we can see how each of these doctrinal points like strands of a rope helps to build a case for the claiming. We will now look in more detail at the positive case in favour of claiming the children, and at other implications and effects that will lead us on to the missionary and catechetical role of the Church in relation to claiming these children as her own.

⁹² Ibid. Paper titled, “Objections to the claiming of children killed before birth as martyrs”, page 134.

⁹³ Ibid. Paper titled, “Covenant”, page 105.

⁹⁴ International Theological Commission *The Hope of Salvation*

⁹⁵ Newman, John Henry. *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. USA: Notre Dame Books, 1989. Chapter 2, page 55 ff.

Chapter 4. The Positive Case.

Development of doctrine in the Church.

In the history of the Church we see that when she was challenged in areas of faith and morals or when theological disputes arose, the Church received the grace to resolve heresies and disputes by developing doctrine and defining dogmas and to make authoritative pronouncements. We can see over the course of centuries how different areas of doctrine have developed to address particular circumstances and moments in the history of the Church. This has determined articles of the Creed such as Christ's divinity and humanity, areas of sacramental theology, moral theology, the Immaculate Conception and Assumption of Our Lady, and martyrdom itself eg. in the process of the canonisation of Saint Maxmillan Kolbe, many believed he would come under the category of Confessor but Pope John Paul II pronounced him a 'Martyr of Charity'. This was a development of the definition of martyrdom. Also, and more recently, we see that a deeper understanding of the doctrine of Divine Mercy has come about through the private revelation to Sr. Faustina of Poland.

Development of doctrine in the Church is a proof that the Holy Spirit is working to deepen Her understanding of Divine Revelation.⁹⁶ Cardinal Newman tells us that development is to be welcomed as something positive which strengthens our faith. He says it 'illustrates, not obscures, corroborates, not corrects, the body of thought from which it proceeds'⁹⁷.

The claiming and the Holy Trinity.

In the Holy Trinity the Son is the Glory of the Father, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds from both, glorifies the Father and the Son. All creation glorifies God through the Son by acknowledging His transcendent Goodness. We glorify God most when we acknowledge and praise Him

⁹⁶ St. Vincent of Lerins sets out the criteria for development of Christian doctrine in the second Reading of the Divine Office of Readings, Week 27 of the year. 'Is there to be no development of doctrine in Christ's Church? Certainly there should be great development. Who would be so grudging towards his fellow-men and so hostile to God as to prevent it?' ...But care should be taken to ensure that it really is development of the faith and not alteration. Development implies that each point of doctrine is expanded within itself, while alteration suggests that a thing has been changed from what it was into something different. It is desirable then that development should take place, and that there should be a great and vigorous growth in the understanding, knowledge and wisdom of every individual as well as of all the people, on the part of each member as well as the whole Church, gradually over the generations and ages'

⁹⁷ *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, page 200.

for the redemptive mission of the Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit helps us to partake in Christ's Priestly offering to His Father. The Spirit comes unceasingly into the world (CCC n. 732) to restore in us the divine likeness. Can we say categorically that the Holy Spirit does not restore the divine likeness in these children? Surely they are not excluded from God's love and the action of the Holy Spirit. By the Church raising these children to the Altar, glory is given to the Holy Trinity; God's Divine Mercy, Love and Justice are acknowledged and glorified, and the power of Christ's Victory on the Cross is universally proclaimed. It shows that Christ 'has put all things under his feet' (Heb 2:8). It is the Father's will that all mankind become members of Christ and share in his glory by being 'conformed by adoptive filiation to His image as God's Son in glory.'⁹⁸

The claiming would show forth to the whole world the glory of the children in heaven and makes visible their mission through Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Church, according to the Father's Will. Through the action of the Church it shows the glory and honour of Christ's Victory on the Cross over all sin and death so that all men might be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. (C.f. 1Tim 2:4). 'He who honours the Son honours the one who sent him,' God the Father. (Jn 5:23). Simply because of the vast number of new martyr saints from virtually every nation worldwide the claiming will therefore glorify the Holy Trinity in a stupendous way.

Children killed before birth and Christ's mission.

Revelation reveals that all persons have been predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son of God (C.f. Rom 8:29). In the Gospel Jesus Himself told us to take up our cross daily and follow him (C.f. Mk 10:21), we are to be so conformed to Christ that He lives in us and we live in him (C.f. Jn 15:4). St. Paul also tells us that if we have died with [Christ] we shall also live with him (Rom 6:8). We can see from the material supporting this development that the children killed before birth are in many ways conformed to Christ and especially so in their deaths.

Like Christ the children have committed no actual sin but are innocent victims of other people's sins. Christ 'came to his own, but his own received him not' (Jn 1:11); the children came to their own parents and nations and they did not receive them or welcome them. Jesus had no where to lay his head (Mt 8:20); the children cannot even lay their heads safely in their mother's womb. Christ was unjustly condemned to death

⁹⁸ See Appendix I. Jobert, Philippe Fr. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*. Paper titled 'Holy Innocents in our times', page 100.

through false witnesses; the children are also condemned to death on the testimony of falsehood put forward to justify their deaths, such as the denial of their personhood. Christ was innocently put to death because the commandment 'Thou shall not kill' was broken, the children also die innocently because this commandment is broken. The children however are not confined to a subjective likeness of Christ, in their deaths they silently witness to the truth of life, to Christ who is 'the Way the Truth and the Life (Jn 14:6).

Children killed before birth and the Holy Spirit.

In St. John's Gospel we are told 'For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will' (Jn 5:21). Through the co-operation of the Mother Church it can be shown that Christ gives these children life in his Church. The Holy Spirit is the Lord the Giver of Life, the Sanctifier and Advocate who proceeds from the Father and Son.⁹⁹ The gifts of the Spirit build up the Church in a good and orderly way, contributing to the harmony and order of the body of Christ, but we need to be careful not to stifle the workings of the Spirit. (Thess. 5:19). The Spirit is supremely free, and blows where He wills (Jn 1:8). He is the children's Sanctifier and Advocate. The Spirit in the Church bears witness to the risen Christ, and he does this mainly through the human witness of members of the community he creates and fills.

The claiming would be a public and universal statement saying that the Spirit of the Father and the Son has come to these children, whom God has created. He has chosen them, the weakest of the weak, to bear witness universally in and through the Church to the risen Christ and to his power in human weakness (C.f. 1Cor 1:27). In the inspiration Our Lord asks the Church to invoke the Spirit on the children so that they can begin their life and mission in the Church. Just like the Bishop invokes the Spirit on the candidates for Confirmation, in the claiming the Church by invoking the Spirit on the children would be confirming their baptism (of martyrdom) and facilitating their mission in the Church to actively witness to the truth.

⁹⁹ The Nicene Creed.

The Church and God's Plan of Salvation.

In the vision of Pope John XXIII, Vatican II strove to show a more open and positive understanding of God's universal salvific will; to reach out to all peoples everywhere with the Gospel message 'so that by hearing the message of salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope and by hoping it may love.' (DV; Prologue) Pope John Paul II's pontificate continued this missionary zeal and he has encouraged the Church's ministers and indeed all the faithful to "put out into the deep" for a great catch of souls. (Lk 5:4)¹⁰⁰.

Showing his personal concern regarding the theological need for a deeper understanding of the eternal fate of 'Children who die without Baptism', Pope John Paul II on the 7th October 2004 asked the International Theological Commission to look into the, 'Nagging Question,'¹⁰¹ of children who die without Baptism. When the Pope received the participants in the plenary assembly of the International Theological Commission, whose purpose is to examine important doctrinal questions, he said the question of the eternal fate of children who die before Baptism is not simply an isolated theological problem, "Many other fundamental topics are closely related to it: the universal salvific will of God; the unique and universal mediation of Jesus Christ; the role of the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation; the theology of the sacraments; the meaning of the doctrine on original sin."¹⁰² Speaking to the consulters the Holy Father goes on to say; "It corresponds to you to scrutinize the nexus among all these mysteries to offer a theological synthesis that might serve as an aid for a more consistent and enlightened pastoral practice".¹⁰³

We understand that through the Church God's plan of salvation is gradually realized as all creation is finally reconciled to Him. It is part of the final period of world history, which begins with the birth of Christ, proceeds with the pilgrim journey of the Church, and will be consummated with the Second Coming of Christ. By claiming these children for Christ and his Church the Church, proclaims to the world and particularly to their parents that '[n]othing is definitively lost.' (EV n. 99) The parents are given the hope of being united with their child in the

¹⁰⁰ John Paul II. Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunt*. (At the beginning of the New Millennium). CTS Publications, London, 2001, n.1.

¹⁰¹ John Paul II's request to the International Theological Commission an institution of the Holy See headed by the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to look into the Matter of Children who Die Without Baptism: A Nagging Question. 7th Oct. 2004, Reported by: Zenit News Services The World Seen from Rome, Date:7th Oct 2004 (Code: ZEO4100703) (Zenit.org)

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

communion of Saints through the Church here in this world and at last in heaven. The life, which the Son of God came to give to human beings, cannot be reduced to a mere existence in time. “Man is called to a fullness of life which far exceeds the dimensions of his earthly existence, because it consists in sharing the very life of God.” (EV n. 2) The children’s short lives are enlightened by the promise of eternal life and renewed by the gift of divine life, which reaches its full realization in eternity (cf. Jn 3:15; 6:4), that “new and eternal life” which consists in communion with the Father, to which every person is freely called by the Son, by the power of the Sanctifying Spirit.

Children killed before birth and Christ’s Prophet, Priestly and Kingly role.

Being the fullness of Revelation and sole mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ has won the redemption of all God’s People and therefore all people, including the children killed before birth, find their meaning in Christ. There can be nothing wanting in Christ’s perfect Sacrifice on the Cross with regard to the salvation of these children¹⁰⁴ and He is ‘the final event towards which all the events of salvation history converge.’¹⁰⁵ Christ’s mission in the world continues as a joint mission with the Holy Spirit. (C.f. CCC. ns. 689, 690, 727) If claimed, the children are shown to be fully included in Christ’s saving victory, and share in Christ’s Prophet, Priestly and Kingly roles in the Church and in the world.

As Prophet, Jesus communicates the Good News of salvation to the world. By the children sharing in this prophetic role they witness to truth and righteousness, to the power of Christ’s Victory over all sin and death. The claiming facilitates this witness and gives it voice in the world. As Priest, Christ mediates between God and man. He accepted suffering and death, and offered himself on the Cross as a sacrifice for sinners. As God He gives gifts to men (cf. Eph 4:8) and the grace of sanctification through His Spirit (cf. 1Cor 12:11). Through the Mass He continues to offer His perfect sacrifice to the Father in the Church through His priests, to draw down God’s mercy on sinners. Sharing in this priestly office, the children’s suffering helps to ‘make up what is lacking in the body of Christ’ (Col 1:24) and are enfolded in Christ’s perfect sacrifice (cf. 2 Cor

¹⁰⁴ In a message dated 11th June 1998(ii) taken from the inspiration Jesus asks the question, “Is there something wanting in my perfect Sacrifice on the Cross?” In another message dated 23 December 2001 Our Lord said: “My Sacrifice is all encompassing, not selective!”

¹⁰⁵ Congregation for the Clergy. *General Directory for Catechesis*, (hereafter GDC). CTS Publications, London, 1997. n. 40.

1:5).¹⁰⁶ The children share in the priestly mediation for all sinners and their innocent suffering united to Christ makes reparation especially for those responsible for their deaths. As King, Christ establishes his kingdom and builds it up through the Church. Freed from original sin and sanctified by God's Love through the Blood of Jesus, the children share in this royal power and with, in and through Christ help to build up His kingdom.

The claiming and Sacred Scripture.

The Church 'constantly finds her nourishment and her strength' (CCC n. 104) in Sacred Scripture. The claiming has positive support throughout Sacred Scripture. The inspiration contains numerous references to both Old and New Testaments shedding light on many theological themes. We find clear evidence throughout the Old and New Testaments which show that God's relationship with man is one of love. God takes care of all his children, sinner and the innocent alike (c.f. Cain and Abel). The sacredness of life is shown to have its beginning and end in God, in his creative activity: "For God made man in his own image." (Gen 9:6); "thou didst knit me together in my mother's womb." (Ps 139:13) Life which was always in God and which is the "light of men" (Jn 1:4) consists in being begotten of God and sharing in the fullness of his love. We understand that man is precious in God's sight, his Creator does not forget him; "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have graven you on the palms of my hands..." (Is 49:15). God does not abandon his people but reminds them that they belong to him. "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jer 32:33) These passages assure us that God has not forgotten these children and is actively seeking to convert the perpetrators, so that in both the children and those who have killed them; God's love, mercy and justice are shown forth.

In the New Testament Christ reveals an even deeper understanding of the significance of the commandments and the new commandment to love one another. Christ's own supreme saving act of love unfolds in the paschal mystery. Jesus speaks in the Gospels of the rewards to those who keep the commandments and the consequences for those who break them (Mt 5:19). He also makes a conditional promise when he said: "If you wish to

¹⁰⁶ See *Lumen Gentium*, n. 10: Speaking of 'The People of God' it states: 'Therefore all the disciples of Christ, persevering in prayer and praising God, should present themselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.' Through the claiming the children are seen to fulfil this requirement.

enter into life keep the commandments” (Mt 19:17). St. John says, “Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him”. (John 3:18-24) If the children’s innocent deaths are recognised as martyrdom and they are claimed for Christ and His Church because they have been killed in opposition to the Commandments, this action will proclaim that both natural and divine law have been broken, in the face of all those who denied that any wrong doing has taken place. In this way the truth replaces false doctrine and false world views.

Sacred Scripture reveals that the Commandments are present within each person (irrespective of their creed); ‘From the beginning, God has implanted in the heart of man the precepts of the natural law. Then he was content to remind him of them. This was the Decalogue.’¹⁰⁷ Proclaiming the children’s martyrdom as a witness to the truth of the Decalogue and other truths will touch human hearts world wide. Opposition from individuals, governments, drug companies, medical agencies or pro-abortion groups to the claiming will not be able to silence the truth that comes from God and is proclaimed by His Church from touching the hearts of millions of people of every nation. It preaches the truth though it may be at first unpopular, because it is necessary.

In the Gospels, Jesus points to the elevated status of the innocence of children: “Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like one of these shall not enter it.”(Mk 10:2-16). This passage contains possibly one of the strongest arguments from the Gospel in support of the claiming. It is this innocence and simplicity that Jesus asks all men and women to acquire; the disposition of a child is the requisite of entry into the Kingdom of God. These innocent children already have this disposition to welcome the kingdom.

Jesus’ teaching on the Beatitudes is poignant for the aborted children. For example, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God’ (Mt 5:8). Having no actual sin the children are innocent. The stain of original sin is contracted and not committed¹⁰⁸ and in their martyrdom they are washed

¹⁰⁷ Cf. CCC n. 2070. St. Irenaeus, Adv. Haeres. 4,15,1:PG.

¹⁰⁸ C.f. CCC n. 404: Original Sin: ‘It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human nature deprived of original holiness and justice. And that is why original sin is called "sin" only in an analogical sense: it is a sin "contracted" and not "committed" - a state and not an act.’; CCC. n. 405: ‘Although it is proper to each individual, (Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1513) original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance,

Footnote continued on next page

in the Blood of Jesus. 'Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of right theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Mt 5:10). These little ones are persecuted world wide in the cause of right, the right to life. It is through the gift of life that all other goods come to us from God. The beatitude of eternal life is a gratuitous gift of God and does not have to be earned by the children. The Beatitudes 'teach us the final end to which God calls everyone: the Kingdom, the vision of God, participation in the divine nature, eternal life, filiation, [and] rest in God.' (CCC n. 1726)

In their persecution for the truth and God's word the children have an apocalyptic significance for these times; "When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; they cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (Rev 6:9,10) The aborted children witness to the Word of God, Christ Himself, Divine Revelation transmitted in Scripture and Tradition.

The theological and biblical sense of a name given by God denotes mission and identity as we see with Jesus¹⁰⁹ and John the Baptist. St. John the Baptist was given a name even before he was conceived, as was Christ Himself. In the charism of Divine Innocence the children are given the name "Mercy Reigns!"¹¹⁰ In this name mercy is shown to have been given to the children via their baptism of blood and through their mission in the Church would show forth God's mercy to those responsible for their deaths, an offer of mercy to all peoples and nations of the world if they will but repent.

Scripture shows that innocent blood cries out for justice beginning with the blood of Abel.¹¹¹ God asks for an account of innocent blood; "For he who avenges blood is mindful of them; he does not forget the cry of the afflicted" (Ps 9:12). Because abortion is conducted in so many countries and the innocent blood of millions of children killed before birth has been spilt throughout the world this has serious justice implications for the rest of mankind. Only Christ's perfect sacrifice can atone for this sin against the children, only His blood can cover this innocent blood. Our Lord in

suffering and the dominion of death,... Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back toward God'

¹⁰⁹ The name 'Jesus' stems from 'Yeshua' and means "Yahweh is salvation". Mc Kenzie S.J. *Dictionary of the Bible*. London: Chapman, 1965.

¹¹⁰ Taken from a message of the inspiration dated 2nd October 1997.

¹¹¹ Genesis 4:10: "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand."

the inspiration has pointed out on many occasions that the Church is not passive, her apostolic action is needed in this regard. Early in the inspiration Our Lord referred to the passage of Deuteronomy 21 in relation to the theme of mediation. We understand that the perfect sacrifice of Christ is perpetuated for all time through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; it is a fundamental part of the Church's role to offer up this sacrifice, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant for the remission of sins of all humanity. The children killed before birth are also the beneficiaries of Christ's redeeming blood. 'Aborted children are fully and actually united to the Paschal Mystery in the Mass as members of Christ Crucified and Risen, they offer it in Christ, and Christ offers it in them as a Sacrifice of thanksgiving.'¹¹² It is only in and through the Catholic Church that a truly fitting praise and thanksgiving can be made for such mercy, justice and love.

The claiming and Sacred Tradition.

The content of the Charism relevant to this development and the theological work that has been drawn from it shows itself to be in accordance with, and confirmed by, various areas of sacred Tradition. We understand that Sacred Tradition which comes from the Apostles develops in the Church through the actions of the Holy Spirit so that the Church constantly moves forward toward 'the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfilment in her.' (DV n. 8) This action takes place in the whole body of the Church and is reflected in the Apostolic texts, the writings of the Fathers, the conciliar decrees and documents, Papal decrees, the writings of the saints, in sacred liturgy, in theological development and through charisms which shed light on different areas of doctrine. Any development that proclaims the word of God, manifests a deeper understanding of it, confirms the truth in areas of faith and refutes moral heresy is surely to be welcomed as a positive move forward.

Veritatis Splendor n. 28 states: 'The Catholic Church 'has faithfully preserved what the word of God teaches, not only about truths, which

¹¹² See Appendix I. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*; Paper titled; "The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the claiming of aborted children", Page 114; "When the Mass is celebrated with reference to the claiming of the children, there is a development of doctrine, by making explicit what is implicitly contained in living Tradition, as it is done from Holy Scripture. Both Scripture and Tradition are the Word of God coming to us in two ways, in complementarity. The Holy Spirit gives assistance to the Church to express the Truth in the liturgy and give the impulse to develop the understanding of the Eucharistic mystery from the liturgical rites and texts, with regard to the children 's involvement in Christ's Sacrifice.'

must be believed but also about moral action' The Church has consistently condemned the immorality of abortion in every age of the Church, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law. (CCC n. 2271) The fact that millions of abortions have been performed since their legalization does not change the moral law that forbids them. The Second Vatican Council (GS n. 51) calls abortion "an unspeakable crime".' By proclaiming the aborted children as martyrs the Church publicly and universally refutes this moral evil and in a positive way proclaims the moral law found in the word of God.

Children killed before birth and the law.

The just requirement of the law is fulfilled in Jesus Christ who is the fullness of the law (Rom. 8.4). The children's baptism of blood, is a baptism of love¹¹³ and 'love is the fulfilling of the law.' (Rom 13:10).¹¹⁴ Love and truth, to which these children bear witness, are inseparably linked in the action of the Holy Spirit. Christ teaches us in the Gospel to love one another. St. Paul in Romans 13:8 says, 'He who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law.' In claiming these children, the Church proclaims to the world God's love for them, that the Catholic Church as their Mother has not forgotten them but embraced them to her bosom and that the fullness of the law in their regard is fulfilled in the love Jesus Christ their Redeemer and Lord has for them.

Children killed before birth and righteousness.

We can see that in the context of righteousness ('Sedek': a right or claim as a means of salvation) that the children have a just claim, since their God given right to life has been taken from them.¹¹⁵ The children are righteous in their innocence. St. Paul says: 'This righteousness of man is not the work of man by achievement or merit; it is God alone who makes man righteous. No one can condemn the man whom God makes righteous' (Rm

¹¹³ In a message from the inspiration dated 2nd September 1998, Jesus said that the aborted children's baptism was a 'baptism of love' through of course a baptism of blood.

¹¹⁴ The inspiration reveals that the children have gone to the source of Baptism, which is the Christ's Victory on the Cross. His suffering on the Cross is the highest expression of His Love for all mankind

¹¹⁵ 'When one has a just claim or a right, in the case of these children the right to the life that God has given to the children, or when one is charged, the process by which his right is established or his innocence vindicated is not only justice under the law, it is also personal salvation.... It establishes a claim upon Yahweh to deliver one from evil.' See McKenzie L John. S.J. *Dictionary of the Bible*. London: Chapman, 1996. Under the heading 'Righteousness', pages 739-743)

8:34) and ‘God works this righteousness through the death of Jesus.’ (1 Co 1:30) Scripture shows that the Lord ‘will deliver the poor and the needy’ (Ps 82:4). The action of the Church with regard to the children and those who are involved in their deaths will show that the Lord has delivered the poor and the needy.

Children killed before birth and the first Holy Innocents.

There is evidently a strong link between the first Holy Innocents and the children killed before birth. This sets forth for the Church, *a positive precedent* for the process of this new martyrdom although some may object that the circumstances are different, but are they in essence? The Church ‘instituted the Feast of the Holy Innocents at a date now unknown, not before the end of the fourth and not later than the end of the fifth century’¹¹⁶. It was recognised that these Holy Innocents had undergone a Baptism of blood.¹¹⁷ A sermon by St. Quodvultdeus from the Divine Office of Readings for the Feast day shows parallels between the historical situation of the children of Bethlehem and the aborted children today. Part of the text states: ‘They could not speak, yet they confessed Christ. Helpless to enter the battle, they still carried off the palm of victory.’¹¹⁸ We see a similarity between the Holy Innocents and the children put to death before birth who also cannot speak, in fact they cannot even cry out like the Bethlehem children. We can ask how did the Holy Innocents confess Christ? – only in the circumstances of their deaths, as an ultimate witness to the transgression of objective truth and the commandment, ‘Thou shall not kill’. The aborted children in their deaths give a similar witness but it may be argued that the adversary (Herod) killed the children at Bethlehem because he was directly seeking the Christ Child (thus a valid reason for their martyrdom). The reading continues:

‘Herod, why are you afraid when you hear that the King has been born? He does not usurp your place; he comes to conquer the devil. But you do not understand this and so you are in frenzy, mad with rage. And your determination to destroy the one infant whom you seek makes you inhumanly indifferent to the deaths of so many others. [.....] He, the source of grace, small yet immense, lies in a manger, and terrifies you on your throne, unknown to you, he works through you to complete His plans

¹¹⁶ *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*. London: Caxton Publishing Company, 1910. Volume 7 page 419.

¹¹⁷ In the wake of the liturgical reform initiated after Vatican II the liturgical colour of the vestments for the feast of the Holy Innocents was changed from purple to red so that it would be clearly understood as a feast for Martyrs.

¹¹⁸ Divine Office, English Edition. Page 65*.

and to free souls from captivity to the devil. Already He has received the children of His enemies into the company of His adopted sons.¹¹⁹

Being infants like the newborn Christ child Herod killed the children of Bethlehem for their subjective likeness to Christ. The aborted children are also infants but they have died for objective truth who is Christ, "If Christ is Truth, whoever is condemned for truth suffers for Christ, and a crown is due to him."¹²⁰ Such is the case with the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist who died for a moral truth, the sixth Commandment upholding the sacredness of marriage. In terms of *criteria for martyrdom*, the children are seen to be closely related to St. John the Baptist. The Baptist was the forerunner of Christ, the children through the Church's action can be forerunners of the coming of Christ to their parents and others, as witnesses to the Redeemer, (through the offer of mercy and call to conversion). Zechariah's prophesy and prayer concerning John the Baptist (Lk 1: 68-79) seems equally relevant for the new holy innocents:

*'As for you, little child,
You shall be called a prophet of God, the Most High.
You shall go ahead of the Lord
To prepare his ways before him,...*

*To make known to his people their salvation
Through forgiveness of all their sin,
The loving-kindness of the heart of our God,
Who visits us like the dawn from on high '*

The Church acknowledges the effectiveness of the sign of martyrdom as a powerful witness to the truth as professed in the Church's faith. As a baptism of blood (CCC n. 1258) martyrdom witnesses to the source of all baptism and the source of the Sacramental life of the Church, Jesus Christ. It points to the ordinary means of salvation, the Sacraments, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. In the liturgical action of proclaiming martyrs, the Church facilitates:

'[A]n outstanding sign of the holiness of the Church', [to] fidelity to God's holy law, witnessed to by death. [It marks] a solemn proclamation and missionary commitment *usque ad sanguinem*, so that the splendour of moral truth may be undimmed in the behaviour and thinking of individuals and society. This witness makes and extraordinarily valuable contribution to warding off [...] a headlong plunge into the most dangerous crisis which can afflict man: the confusion between good and evil, which makes it

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ St Augustine (PLS2, 425). Referred to by Father Philippe Jobert in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 123.

impossible to build up and to preserve the moral order of individuals and communities.’¹²¹

On this point of witness, as the visible sacrament of Christ,¹²² the Church benefits from bringing these new innocents visibly inside her fold, to give a positive witness to the world, ‘a witness of hope’.¹²³ Not to do this in effect gives a negative witness i.e. acknowledging only the silence of death instead of proclaiming the Gospel of life in Christ. It gives the impression to the world that God is defeated in the holocaust of the killing of these innocents and that He has no answer to this problem.

Children killed before birth as virgin martyrs.

These children are virgins¹²⁴ and if acknowledged by the Church as martyrs, then virgin martyrs. Revelations 14:4 speaks of virgins who ‘follow the Lamb wherever he goes’. Of virgins, St. Augustine said they are “of Christ, in Christ, with Christ, after Christ, through Christ, for Christ.” And this is as it should be, for Christ is the “Archvirgin” and “the leader of the choir of virgins,” as Methodius calls him.¹²⁵ The Church Fathers show that virgin martyrs have a unique place in the Church. St. Athanasius says:

...[V]irginity, like martyrdom, appears from time to time as a kind of mark of the Church....’ Virginity like martyrdom, must have seemed to flow from the very nature of the Church, which was itself a virgin; sprung up from a sort of inner necessity within the Church, drawn on by the desire for Christ and the yearning to be one with God in the sharing of his incorruptible nature.¹²⁶

St. Cyprian says of virgins “You pass through the world without the contagion of the world. As long as you remain chaste and virgins you are equal to the angels of God.”¹²⁷ Though their passing through has been brief the aborted children have not been contaminated by the world.

¹²¹ VS n. 105

¹²² C.f. LG n. 1: ‘Since the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race’.

¹²³ C.f. In a homily given on Trinity Sunday 6th June 2004 to the Bishops of Switzerland and prelates from other countries, to lay Catholics and members of other Christian denominations, Pope John Paul II said: “I ask the Lord to be a witness of hope among you, a witness of that hope that “does not disappoint” because it is founded on God’s love, “poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Rom 5:5) Today the world is especially in need of ‘a supplement of hope’ ” L’Osservatore Romano, 9th June, 2004, pages 1&7.

¹²⁴ Cf. Being both male and female the aborted children are all understood as virgins, for “there is neither male nor female” (Gal 3:28), but Christ is all and in all” (Col 3:11).

¹²⁵ Ramsay, Boniface. *Beginning to read the Fathers*. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1993. Page 143.

¹²⁶ Ibid, page 147.

¹²⁷ Ibid , page 145.

Gregory of Nyssa tells us; ‘Virginity is called uncorrupted, as such it is a participation in the [incorruptibility] of God himself.’¹²⁸ St. Augustine said: “Nothing guards the good of virginity except God himself who gave it, and God is love. Therefore the guardian of virginity is love, but the place of this guardian is humility. For there he lives, he who said that his Spirit rests on the lowly and the meek”.¹²⁹ The virgin Church seems the most appropriate place from which to show forth the value and beauty of the virginity and martyrdom of these children. It would help to reinstate the value of virginity for all states of life and not just in its physical form, but also the deeper spiritual reality of belonging wholly to God.

The work of Christ and the Mission of the Church.

The positive effects of such a development and public proclamation however great can only be fully understood in the light of the Church’s mission and work; ‘The Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgement, to serve and not to be served.’ (GS n. 3) The claiming would show universally that the children have died for justice and truth and through the Church they become heralds of the Resurrection of Christ the Redeemer to all those who have harmed them.

‘Their recognition as martyrs by a possible future act of the College of bishops *sub et cum Petro*, ‘under and with Peter’, would testify in striking fashion to the universality of the Catholic Church’s philanthropic outreach in the perspective of salvation, and constitute a flaming witness to her stand in defence of the human dignity and rights of the conceptus, the conceived persons, everywhere (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2270).’¹³⁰

As the ‘sacrament of salvation’ (LG n. 48) the Church has a universal role to play in the positive argument for claiming these children for Christ. The Catholic Church has a motherly responsibility towards these children, to countless numbers of their parents, to governments and to medical personnel who have been involved in their deaths. The Church needs to reach these people more effectively than is presently happening; to call them to the truth, to the Church and her sacraments, in order to reconcile

¹²⁸ Ibid, page 141; ‘...For the Father has a son but has begotten Him in a virginal way, without passion; and the Holy Spirit is virginal as well. Virginity is therefore deifying. It enjoys communion with the whole celestial nature; since it is free from passion it is always present to the powers above.’

¹²⁹ Ibid, page 146.

¹³⁰ *Abortion and Martyrdom*. ‘Setting the Question’, page 6.

them to God and his laws, and to show all nations that their hope in God is not disappointed. (CCC n. 1261) Love is the driving force of the Church's mission and it is God's loving action in the Church that will help her to reach out to those who have killed the children, while at the same time showing to the world that God has not forgotten the cry of the needy (Ps 9:18). 'It is from God's Love for all men that the Church in every age receives both the obligation and the vigour of her missionary dynamism, for the love of Christ urges us on'. (2 Cor 5:4; cf. AA 6; RM n. 11)

The Church is not only a worshipping community but also a prophetic witnessing community, called to reach out beyond itself to the world (Cf. LG n.10,12) and to bring God's people into 'communio'. The claiming will show that Christ has justified the children and that they are partakers in His glorious life. We see from the Church's earliest teachings she has always condemned abortion. From her ongoing magisterial documents and her latest condemnation of embryo experiments, she has consistently defended the right to life of every human person, from conception to natural death. The Church has authority and the prime responsibility to teach in matters of faith and morals because she has received this mandate from Christ and to make decisions regarding doctrinal matters and all elements of faith.¹³¹ It belongs to the Roman Pontiff and the Body of Bishops to make judgements 'in accordance with Revelation itself, which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with, that is, the Revelation which is written and orally handed down.' (LG n. 25) If it is theologically established that through a movement of the Holy Spirit a greater light is being given in an area of faith and morals and that a great mercy is being offered to mankind, it must come to the people via the discipline and guidance of the Church's teaching Magisterium.

'Christ sent His Apostles to teach the Gospel to all nations and He poured on them His Holy Spirit so that their words would reach the minds and hearts of all men. The strength of the mission given by the Lord, and the impulse of the Holy Spirit, the deep desire for the salvation of all nations, charges the Church with the duty of preaching Christ's truth, and the whole truth. Revelation is entrusted to her, not only to transmit and to conserve it, but also to penetrate and to develop its contents, because the Holy Spirit leads her always into the whole truth. Thus the divine plan of salvation becomes more and more known in itself, and in its numberless effects.'¹³²

¹³¹ C.f. VS. n.27: 'The Church, in her life and teaching, is thus revealed as "the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1Tim 3:15), including the truth regarding moral action. Indeed, "the Church has the right always and everywhere to proclaim moral principles, even in respect of the social order, and to make judgements about any human matter in so far as this is required by fundamental human rights or the salvation of souls. (Canon 747,2.)'

¹³²See Appendix I. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*. Paper titled; "Duty of the Church regarding aborted children." Page 126.

Fr. Jobert shows that in our time one of these effects is the ‘glorious martyrdom of unborn children.’

‘The glory of this martyrdom sets in a greater light the Divine Will of universal salvation, the sanctifying power of Divine Love, through the baptism of Love flowing from the pierced Heart of Jesus, and the infinite Mercy of God which cannot be prevented by the children’s death, by the cruelty of men, or by the limits of the ordinary means of salvation. It shows Divine Justice operating for the sake of the innocent. It shows the power of Christ’s Blood which sanctifies the blood of the slain infants, and the power of the Divine Word speaking through their silent witness to Truth. It gives the Church the glory of an immense army of martyrs who are her children. It manifests the supreme importance of the grace, which is given through baptism and the other Sacraments.’¹³³

Of all the positive arguments that show the validity of proclaiming the martyrdom of these children, the argument from Divine Love is supreme, because ‘God is Love’ (1Jn 4:16) and no one can separate these children from the Love of God (cf. Rom 8:31-39). The children do not have to do something to earn God’s love or to be saved by Christ, it is not our love for God but his saving love for us (cf. 1Jn 4:10). The nature of God’s love for these children is a sanctifying love. When this point is seriously considered it raises the whole issue of the children’s eternal fate to a higher level since they have been created by God who is Love, ‘to share, by knowledge and love, in God’s own life.’ (CCC n. 356) Divine Love, it seems, is the perfect answer to the children’s fate and shows how they are included in God’s saving plan: Justice is met for these children, mercy is given to them and offered to those who have killed them,¹³⁴ sinners are called to repentance, glory is given to God, to the children, and the Mother Church as she is adorned with so many martyr saints. Satisfaction is made to God for the children with regard to original sin; the dignity of the motherly and fatherly role of men and women is shown in its proper light. The forces of evil are defeated and praise is given to God, while the discipline, authority and teachings of the Church are proclaimed in a merciful, just and loving way

The main focus of the last two chapters has been on the theological issues involved with claiming these children as martyrs. It shows how this development is compatible to the doctrinal teaching of the Church.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Cf. St. Paul, entirely approved of the killing of St. Steven but now enjoys heaven in his company. What joy for repentant parents and others who approved the killing of these children, that one day they may through God’s love and forgiveness enjoy heaven with the children if they will but repent and accept God’s mercy.

Evangelisation seeks to transmit this teaching to all peoples and it follows that such an action by the Church would have missionary, evangelizing and catechetical implications for the Church's mission to the nations.

Chapter 5. The mission of the Church - evangelization, initial proclamation, and catechesis.

Those who have been raised with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph 2:1, 5) are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17; 1 Cor 10:11) but realisation of the Resurrection in this life is not yet complete. Hence, the need for teaching the faith and encouragement in a way of life that is pleasing to God, through the Church's instruction and catechesis. In this context the Church fully understands her responsibility to evangelise. The Church's General Directory for Catechesis states: 'The Church exists in order to evangelise, that is "the carrying forth of the Good News to every sector of the human race so that by its strength it may enter into the hearts of men and renew the human race.'" (GDC n. 46) The Holy Spirit is the principle cause of this work and 'sustains the task of proclaiming the Gospel in every corner of the world.'¹³⁵

We understand Divine Revelation as God's intervention in human history to help men and women to know and live the truth with certainty and to give them the grace to do so. Ignorance of the truth has brought great suffering to many people down the ages. Catechesis has the role of communicating this knowledge of truth to all peoples and it is an ongoing part of the Church's mission of evangelization. In his Apostolic Exhortation on Catechesis in our Time, *Catechesi Tradendae*, Pope John Paul II refers to catechesis as a "moment", 'a very remarkable one – in the process of evangelisation.'¹³⁶ The Church teaches that the 'fundamental task' of catechesis is to present Jesus Christ as the fullness of Revelation 'and everything in relation to him.' (GDC n. 98) Catechesis aims 'to encourage a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith' (GDC n. 65) and strives to instruct 'the true disciple of Christ by means of a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and the message of Our Lord Jesus Christ.' (CT n.19)

Having considered the likely effects of the claiming, it seems that the action of the Church in proclaiming the martyrdom of children put to death before birth and raising them to the altar would most certainly be a very remarkable moment in the process of evangelisation. It would mark this "moment" as part of 'a rich, complex and dynamic reality'.(CT n. 19) It would present the Church with an unprecedented¹³⁷ catechetical

¹³⁵ GDC n. 43; DV n.8, CCC ns. 85-87.

¹³⁶ John Paul II. Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, On Catechesis in our Time (hereafter CT) CTS Publications, London, 1979. n. 63; n. 18; cf. n. 20c.

¹³⁷ Cf. Unprecedented in terms of the vast number of martyrs proclaimed by the Church in one liturgical act. As initial proclamation it would immediately point all peoples to the Gospel and
Footnote continued on next page

opportunity to proclaim the Resurrection and the saving work of Christ and His Church. As a “moment” of initial proclamation it points all peoples to the Gospel; to conversion, repentance, and to the ordinary means of salvation through the Church’s sacramental system.

In his Encyclical on the Church’s Mission *Redemptoris Missio*, Pope John Paul II speaks of proclamation as being the ‘permanent priority of mission [...a mission that proclaims] that in Jesus Christ ... salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God’s grace and mercy’ (RM n.44). The claiming is the proclamation of the truth and points to many areas of Catholic doctrine, it proclaims the Gospel of life, the truth of the Commandments and it is a call to repentance to all who reject or disobey the laws of God and the Church. It would also show forth God’s love for all humanity and His justice and mercy. Proclamation ‘has Christian conversion as its aim [which is] a gift of God, a work of the Blessed Trinity. It is the Spirit who opens people’s hearts so that they can believe in Christ and “confess him” (cf. 1Cor 12:3).’ (RM n.46) As “principle catechist”, the Holy Spirit inspires all catechetical activity and after the seed has been sown helps in its propagation. The Holy Spirit is the protagonist, ‘the principal agent of the whole of the Church’s mission. It is He who leads the Church on her missionary paths. This mission continues and in the course of history, unfolds the mission of Christ, who was sent to evangelise the poor’. (CCC n. 852)

Speaking of this complex field of mission and the importance of initial proclamation, John Paul II tells us that ‘initial proclamation has a central and irreplaceable role, since it introduces man “into the mystery of the love of God, who invites him to enter into a personal relationship with himself in Christ.’¹³⁸ He adds ‘the people who have not yet received an initial proclamation of Christ constitute the majority of mankind’. (RM n. 40) A radical event such as the claiming with such a global outreach could change this. Raising these children, who are from every nation, to the Altar of the Catholic Church, would manifest a great action of the Holy Spirit to all peoples everywhere. It would be necessary that catechesis accompany this process and to continue after the claiming, for the understanding of the people so that “[t]hey shall see who have never been told of him, and they shall understand who have never heard of him.’ (Is 52:15)

to the ordinary means of salvation; to conversion and repentance through the Catholic Church’s sacramental system.

¹³⁸ Ibid; Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church. *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*. St. Paul Editions, U.S.A., 1975, ns. 13,14.

New principles for catechesis have emerged in the Church since Vatican II. The *General Catechetical Directory* was promulgated in April 1971 and the *General Directory for Catechesis* in 1997. In the intervening years and with the promulgation of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* in 1975 a great enrichment in catechesis has taken place with many significant developments. As new principles emerged, catechesis would in future be understood as firmly situated in the essential mission of the Church – the mission of evangelization, which is a principal effect of the claiming.

We understand that the priority of the Church’s mission is the salvation of all people. At the first Pentecost we see how Peter and the Apostles witnessed to the risen Christ, calling the people to repentance and belief in the Gospel. Peter told the people that they had crucified the Christ. The people heard the Apostle’s witness in their own language and when they were told of the seriousness of what they had done in putting Jesus to death, ‘they were cut to the heart’ and asked, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’ (Acts 2:37). Peter told them to: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children...”(Acts 2:39) We see here that Peter’s discourse consisted of both initial proclamation and catechesis and the people responded by being baptised, a sign of repentance and conversion. They then ‘devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.’ (Acts 2:42).

In the wake of St. Peter’s witness we see that thousands were converted. The claiming appears to have many elements of this initial Pentecostal proclamation of the Gospel. It is for the whole Church to believe Christ’s words “What you ask of the Father in My Name he will give you” (Jn 16:23) and in the wake of the Magisterium making such a proclamation to pray in her liturgy to the Holy Spirit, to pour out His gifts and to inspire conversions. It was the power of the Holy Spirit that gave the first Apostles the ability to bear witness boldly to Jesus.¹³⁹ Such a public witness of Peter’s Successor and the successors of the Apostles united to that of the children’s witness, needs to be heard universally with regard to the children’s salvation. This proclamation by its very nature needs to be public so that the power of the claiming reaches all nations and all peoples, calling them to conversion.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Cf. Acts 2:29; 4:13; 29, 31; 9:27-28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8, 26; 28:31.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Mt 5:15: “Nor do men light a lamp and put in under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.”

This public witness has a special place in the work of evangelisation as ‘people today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers,[.....] and in life and action than in theories.’ (RM n. 42) The claiming would present a unique ecclesial witness for these times. People all over the world who may have been conditioned by a ‘culture of death’ mentality need to know that in terminating the life of unborn children they have crucified Christ anew; ‘What you do to the least of my brethren you do to me’ (Mt 25:40). They need to know that through his resurrection and as Lord of the living and the dead (Rom 14:9), Jesus Christ has raised up these children to be with him in paradise and is calling those who have killed them to this same happiness through repentance and conversion.

It is a fact that millions of individuals from every nation are implicated in the deaths of these children to different degrees of culpability. There are many others indirectly involved in this moral breakdown especially those guilty of the sin of complacency and indifference,¹⁴¹ because evil is allowed to triumph when people remain silent. These people are the responsibility of the Mother Church and part of her mission ‘ad gentes’. These people could not be aware of the wonderful dignity humanity has received in virtue of Jesus Christ, that ‘[h]uman nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, in him, [Jesus Christ] has been raised to a dignity beyond compare. They are unlikely to have heard John Paul II’s statement in *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 104: ‘It is precisely in the “flesh” of every person that Christ continues to reveal himself and to enter into fellowship with us, so that rejection of human life, in whatever form that rejection takes, is really a rejection of Christ.’ (Cf. Mat 25: 40) Awakening people to the reality of this mystery requires a bold preaching of the truth.¹⁴² Many of these people are lapsed Catholics who have fallen away from the faith, others are non-Christians who may “have been shaped by the climate of secularism and ethical relativism”¹⁴³ and world views that are anti life.

The claiming would open a door for a comprehensive catechesis, revealing the beauty and light of Revelation, it would proclaim the saving Will of God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, Redeemer of all mankind, the

¹⁴¹ Cf. RM n. 35: ‘One of the most serious reasons for the lack of interest in the missionary task is a widespread indifferentism, which sad to say, is found also among Christians. It is based on incorrect theological perspectives and is characterised by a religious relativism which leads to the belief that “one religion is as good as another”.’

¹⁴² Cf. Romans 10:14 -17: ‘But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent?..... So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.’

¹⁴³ John Paul II. Apostolic Exhortation, *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*. CTS Publications London, 1994, n. 36b; GS n.19c.

institution and authority of the Church Christ founded and her teaching authority in matters of faith and morals. It would proclaim the truth of the Commandments, the dignity of the human person, the doctrines of original sin and baptism, the Church's doctrine on the other Sacraments, etc. it prepares the way for an exposition of Catholic doctrine through a catechetical framework.

Of course all areas of the faith cannot be taught in one public act of declaration, yet this "moment" could be a necessary catalyst to begin a pastoral catechesis universally on all levels. It would provide a public forum to refute moral relativism and erroneous world views (some of which are directly behind the cultural acceptance of abortion and attacks on the sanctity of human life). It would put forward the Catholic world-view as a coherent teaching upholding the Gospel of life. The claiming would present new opportunities for ecumenical dialogue as it touches upon key areas of Christian teaching, for example how we are saved in Christ, the role of baptism, nature of original sin, the theology of grace, the last things, and the role of the Church. Though some of these areas are sensitive in the work of ecumenical dialogue the claiming gives the Church the opportunity to enter more deeply into them. The claiming of these children for Christ would witness to the tender motherly role of the Mother Church in embracing these children as her own, and the offer of reconciling those who have killed them, calling them into unity and showing that the children themselves are part of the communion of saints.

Teaching Tools for Catechesis.

In 1992 the Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum* n.3 presented the Catechism of the Catholic Church as "a sure and authentic reference text for teaching Catholic doctrine" and recommended that pastors and the faithful "use it assiduously in fulfilling their mission of proclaiming the faith and calling people to the Gospel of life." The Church encourages all the faithful to appropriate the content of the faith as presented in the Catechism. It is with this background that the new General Directory for Catechesis has been produced. Along with the documents of Vatican II and subsequent documents since then, the Church has at her disposal all the tools needed for catechesis in terms of the directives and the guidance necessary for a widespread catechesis of people from all nations.

The GDC lays down directives and guidance with regard to the way catechesis should be conducted in the Church and in the face of societies of diverse cultures ('inculturation'). It considers the content of the Gospel message (as presented in the new Catechism) and specifies how the faith is to be taught based on divine pedagogy, to those of diverse situations and

contexts. To be effective, catechesis requires a good understanding of the context in which it is taking place i.e. the faith and understanding of people, and their culture. To make the most of the missionary opportunity of the claiming would require a systematic approach to catechesis at diocesan and parochial levels, for all age groups. The Church would need to be ready with answers for those who seek clarification in the wake of the claiming. Priests and catechists would need to have a coherent understanding of the theology of the claiming; and how the children are part of the communion of saints.

The striking nature of declaring children killed in abortion as martyrs to the truth of the right to their God given life, to Christ, the Way the Truth and the life, to the word of God, especially the Commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’; could stir those faithful who may be weak in terms of catechetical formation to receive further instruction so as to understand better the doctrinal basis of such an act by the Church. In such an unprecedented missionary field every member of the Church can be apostolic and missionary since we understand that ‘[c]atechesis is a responsibility of the entire Church community.’ (GDC. n. 220)

The place of Liturgy in catechesis.

We understand that Catholic liturgy is based upon the priestly office of Jesus Christ and above all upon his redemptive sacrifice, which is perpetuated in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In and through the liturgy, the faithful can share in Christ’s prayer to His Father, to participate in and live out the mystery of salvation. Liturgy in fact is the end purpose of catechesis since catechesis has the role ‘not simply to pass on correct doctrine, but above all to initiate its recipients into a living faith.’¹⁴⁴ It directs people to communion with God through the Paschal Mystery; ‘Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of the liturgical and sacramental activity of the Church, for it is in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of men.’ (CT n. 23)

Liturgy is thus the pre-eminent place for catechesis. The liturgical act of the Catholic Church claiming these children for Christ and His Church and proclaiming them martyr saints, would have far reaching effects especially for those directly affected by this development. With conversion they are called into communion with the Church, to partake in her liturgical life; to share in her sacramental life and in her prayer and praise. The very act of

¹⁴⁴ Martimort A.G. *Principles of the Liturgy*. USA: Collegeville Books, 1978, page 276.

claiming these children is an act of praising God and acknowledging His goodness towards both the children and perpetrators. Moreover it touches on many elements of salvation not only for the children and for those involved in their deaths but for people everywhere at whatever level of the understanding they may have of the Catholic faith. Liturgical celebration and healing services, homilies, prayers, hymns etc. can be opportunities to introduce people to Catholic initiation and deeper conversion.

Means of communication.

The Church encourages the use of the media in spreading the Gospel message. In the document *'Ethics in Communications'*, the Pontifical Council for Social Communications states: 'The Church's approach to the means of social communication is fundamentally positive [and] encouraging. ...she considers these instruments to be not only products of human genius but also great gifts from God and true signs of the times.'¹⁴⁵ Modern media can provide a powerful means for the Church to make known, the reasons for a solemn liturgical act such as the claiming and on-going catechesis.

We see from the recent events of the death of John Paul II and the election of Pope Benedict XVI, that world social media networks can be a positive instrument for broadcasting the Gospel message and helping the Church's mission reach an unprecedented number of people, believers and non-believers alike. The truth speaks for itself and touches hearts, as we saw by the numbers of people who responded to the warmth and love of John Paul II, someone who fearlessly proclaimed the truth in season and out of season.

Creedal Catechesis.

Creedal Catechesis can be an effective tool as a basis for helping people to understand how the children are included in God's plan of salvation. Our profession of faith is a summary of all we believe and the children are included in this belief: 'We believe in God the Father Almighty'¹⁴⁶: God cannot be ultimately defeated by the holocaust of abortion or by man's inhumanity to man with regard to these children. To the secular world

¹⁴⁵ *Ethics in Communications*, (Rome, June 2000) n. 4, *Ethics in Internet* (Rome, February 2002), *The Church and Internet* (Rome, February 2002) Pontifical Council for Social Communications, Rome, June 2000, cf. *Inter Mirifica*, 1; *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 45; *Redemptoris Missio*, 37.

¹⁴⁶ Nicene Creed.

God and His Church seem to be defeated in this matter and the devil has won the victory but the raising of these children to martyr status within the Church refutes that assumption. We believe in one ‘Lord Jesus Christ’¹⁴⁷ and that through Him all men are saved: The children have not rejected God or committed any actual sin so they cannot be outside Christ’s saving power. Certainly those who have killed them cannot determine their eternal fate in God; ‘Where sin abounds grace abounds all the more’ (Rom 5:20).

We profess that Christ is ‘born of the Virgin Mary’: The Motherly role of Mary is intimately united to the Motherly role of the Church for she is a type of the Church. (Cf. LG ns. 64, 65) The Mother of God and the Mother Church constantly seeks the salvation of all God’s children. ‘These aborted infants also stand in a special relation to the Mother of God whose appointment to be Mother of the Church (John 19:26-27) is inseparable from the compassion she showed at the cross when the ‘sword’ of Simeon’s prophecy pierced her soul (Luke 2:35).’¹⁴⁸ Our Lord has revealed in the inspiration that it is his Mother who is bringing this cause to the Mother Church under the title of “Our Lady, Mother of the Hidden and Mystical Wounds.” This refers to the hidden wounds the Mother of Christ suffered beneath the Cross, ‘when she too ‘died’, inwardly, in the death of the Fruit of her womb, [and which] have power to succour in proportion (if Mary’s Motherhood of the Church be the measuring-rule of her active compassion) to the depth of human need. And of all the needy, those about to be aborted – already potential members of the Church – are the weakest and most abandoned. [I]f aborted children enjoy a special place within the range of Mary’s spiritual Motherhood, the Church, of which the compassionate Mother of God is the exemplar, must likewise have a special regard for these infants.’¹⁴⁹

‘We believe in the ‘Holy Spirit the Lord the giver of life,’¹⁵⁰: The Spirit who first gave life to the children cannot be defeated by the sins of those who have killed them. The ‘Spirit reaches the depths of every thing even the depths of God’ (1Cor 2:10). The sanctifying Spirit can therefore reach these children who ‘do not know how to pray’ yet through their Advocate can ‘cry out in their need’, “Abba Father”(Gal 4:6). Through the Spirit and in Christ, ‘God can raise up children to Abraham from what the world considers as lifeless stones.’ (Mt 3:9).

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 5.

¹⁴⁹ *Abortion and Martyrdom*, pages 5-6.

¹⁵⁰ Nicene Creed.

We believe in ‘the communion of saints’: the claiming shows how the children are members of that communion and how they become recognised members of the Church. It shows that we can seek their intercession like the other saints. The children’s martyr witness calls those who have killed them to conversion, to the ‘forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting’.¹⁵¹ By the Church raising these children to the Altar, she is presented with a unique opportunity to affirm and give catechesis on the Creed. Through the prophetic witness of these children all are invited to believe in ‘the One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church acquired by Christ at the price of His blood’, and to ‘the resurrection of the body and life everlasting’.¹⁵²

Raising awareness to the theology of Vatican II.

We can see how Vatican II emphasised the theology of how all the baptised share in Christ’s triple office of Prophet, Priest and King and are called to actively participate in these offices. (Cf. LG ns.10, 12, 13, 33, 34, 35) The catechesis that accompanies the claiming would need to explain how this is so for the aborted children and its implications for the rest of the faithful. In this way people can better understand the benefits the children bring to the Church and indeed to all humanity through their prophetic witness to the Truth that comes from God and is taught by the Church. In turn it will help individuals to better appreciate the importance of sacramental baptism as initiation into the Mystical Body of Christ, what it means for each of the faithful to share in the prophet, priestly and kingly role of Christ and how each of the baptised are called to fulfil their baptismal promises in their lives. It presents an excellent catechetical realisation of Gaudium et Spes n. 22.

The claiming opens up the way for the long term ‘remedy’¹⁵³ to abortion; the teaching of the Novitiate of the Holy Family which fulfils many of the directives in Vatican II’s documents regarding the laity, and how they are to carry out their male and female roles in the Church and in family life, in their vocations and in the world

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ In the inspiration Our Lord described the claiming as “emergency first” and then “urgency second; the remedy which is the Novitiate of the Holy Family” (message given to Patricia 27th June 2000).

Evangelising Activity and the Dignity of the Human Person.

The General Directory for Catechesis, n.19 states: ‘The evangelising activity of the Church in the field of human rights has, as its undeniable objective, the task of revealing the inviolable dignity of every human person. In a certain sense, “it is the central and unifying task of service which the Church, and the lay faithful in her, are called to render to the human family”, catechesis must prepare them for this task.’¹⁵⁴ The pastoral care of millions of people involved in the deaths of these children is at stake here. It is a missionary area that the Church needs to enter with vigour, ‘to seek out the lost and bring back those who have strayed from the truth (cf. Lk 19:10). The claiming is an affirmation of the dignity of every human person – the dignity and personhood of these children and other vulnerable people in society, the dignity of motherhood and fatherhood and the dignity of holy matrimony.

Catechesis for conversion and re-evangelization.

Those people, who may be touched by the claiming and are moved to seek admittance into the Catholic Church, can be directed towards the new Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. This was established from the directives of Vatican II and is an invaluable preparation for those seeking to become Catholics and to receive formation in the faith. Various methodologies and formats for instruction have been prepared with a view to helping catechumens prepare for initiation into the Church. The success of such programmes has highlighted the hunger and need for ongoing catechesis, not only for those recently initiated, but also for the greater majority of the faithful. As well as those outside the Church there are members of the Catholic Church who themselves have been involved in abortion and lapsed Catholics who have rejected the Church’s teaching in this area; all need re-evangelization. The claiming can be an opportunity to reach people who may have become indifferent about their faith, catechesis stemming from the claiming can help to enliven it and give them a new enthusiasm to live the faith and witness to it in the world.

Cultural changes are continually taking place in our society and many in the Catholic Church from a standpoint of faith, are finding themselves ill equipped to cope with new ideas and worldviews. They feel their faith is being undermined by the society they live in. Secularism tends to attack those values that traditionally upheld a religious outlook on life in the family and in society as a whole. Abortion, embryo experiments and the

¹⁵⁴ John Paul II. *Christifideles Laici*, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation (hereafter CL). CTS Publications, London, 1988, n. 37; Cf. John Paul II. *Centesimus Annus*, Encyclical Letter (hereafter CA). CTS Publications, London, 1991, n. 47; AAS 83 (1991).

culture of death are symptoms of a widespread disregard for the moral law. Ideologies contrary to the Gospel message and Catholic teaching are often imposed at political and social levels that gradually influence and condition whole societies. The claiming gives the Church an opportunity to firmly restate the Gospel teaching and the dignity of the human person in the light of Christ. It invites those who reject or compromise the faith, and those who know nothing about the faith to 'come and see' (Jn 1:39).

There are however many in the Church whose faith is strong and inspired by the vision and optimism of the John Paul II and further encouraged by Pope Benedict XVI. For these people and especially those working in prolife areas, the proclamation of Christ's Victory in these children through the Universal Church will give great joy and positive encouragement. They will see the motherly care of the Church for God's people, the power and authority of the Magisterium proclaiming the truth and a doctrinal answer to the holocaust of abortion and the killing of these children. It will confirm the faithful everywhere that their belief in Christ and His Church is well founded and eloquently shows forth to the world Christ's Victory over all sin and death in all its power and beauty.

Chapter 6. Conclusion.

In this thesis we have examined the theological and catechetical implications of the Church proclaiming the martyrdom of aborted and embryo children killed before birth. It has been shown that such a wide reaching and indeed for many, radical development, would in turn have many other implications, doctrinal and pastoral. While concentrating on the key issues relating to the development, it was deemed necessary at the outset to look at the present situation and scale of abortion and embryo experimentation today, so that one can appreciate the seriousness of this issue, a moral breakdown that has become acceptable in so many societies globally. The effects of abortion cannot be underestimated, along with the hidden physical and psychological health problems suffered by individuals directly involved in abortion there are wider serious demographic disturbances which can affect the future stability of countries and this imbalance in the populations of nations is already causing deep concern. The spiritual effects on individuals, families and nations is considerable.

We cannot go on killing millions of innocent children, God in His justice will ask for an account of the innocent blood that has been spilt worldwide. What punishment could possibly meet this crime yet in this sin alone mankind continues to affront God obstinately as if nothing will come of it. Through the inspiration however we can see that God is offering the world an unprecedented mercy through the claiming and through it the world will know that justice and mercy have met.

Having looked at an overview of the Catholic Church's position on this matter, her Magisterial and papal documents clearly condemning abortion and the 'culture of death' mentality, it is evident that the Church has remained far from silent on this issue and consistently upholds the dignity of the human person from conception to natural death. Why then has the Church's message not seemed to have changed the situation regarding attacks on human life? The reasons are as complex and numerous as the individuals and circumstances involved in the killing of the unborn. This problem is still predominately considered within the Church as a moral question. The proposal for the Catholic Church to claim those killed before birth as Companion Martyrs of the first Holy Innocents contains within it important elements in the defence of life and promotes a Christian 'culture of life'. If we are to defend life from the Christian tradition it must be at the deepest level, which is based upon the revelation of Jesus Christ who has conquered sin and death. So in addition to the theology regarding the morality of killing the unborn, it is necessary to explore the theology concerning the status of its victims for whom Christ came to give life more abundantly. The salvation of these children is

fundamentally important in the fight against abortion. If we defend their right to life must they not be given life in the Church for all to see otherwise there is a disparity? The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that we are allowed to hope that there is a way of salvation for these children. We have a duty to look into the reasons for that hope, (c.c.c.1261) remembering that St. Paul tells us our hope will not be disappointed. Rom: 5:5

Before entering upon the theological issue involved it was necessary to look at the origins of this inspiration in the light of the Church's teaching on private revelation. It is clear from her teaching that the Church recognises and welcomes the ongoing inspiration of the Holy Spirit for the growth and well-being of the life of the Church, be it through charisms or a deeper understanding of Revelation. The Church's Magisterium seeks to decide what constitutes an authentic development through theological development and the *sensus fidei*. True Catholic theological development demands that it is in harmony with Scripture, Tradition and Magisterial teaching. It seem to us that this development shows that harmony. In 2004, Pope John Paul II asked the International Theological Commission to consider the question of the fate of infants who die before Baptism and here we see a move within the Church to grapple with this question. Having looked at the content of this inspiration, there are theologians who believe that there is evidence to show that this charism can make a positive contribution to this issue. It should be considered if God is speaking to the Church and showing, in a mighty way, that the Church's prayers and the work of pro-life organizations has been answered through this development.

It is to be expected however that such a development will have to face rigorous theological scrutiny and opposition. The objections covered in this thesis consider some of the theological issues involved. The replies to these objections appeal to existing Catholic doctrine and are consistent with sound theological debate. Central to this is the question, can these children be considered martyrs and if so how? While looking to the tradition we must also look to the fundamental roots of martyrdom for the answer. The subjective criteria traditionally used in what is classically considered to constitute the definition of martyrdom i.e. death in *odium fidei* is not sufficient in this case because of the various intentions of those involved i.e. the perpetrators of abortion. The children however objectively die for Christ because those who kill the innocent transgress the natural moral law that is written on the human heart.

Why then are not all innocent victims of murder martyrs? We see in the case of aborted children that there is no doubt as to their innocence and as victims they are totally helpless. The crime of children put to death before

birth is organized and perpetuated by governments, abortion clinics, hospitals, doctors and drug companies to serve their own agendas. Through no fault of their own the children are deprived of the ordinary means of salvation. It is Christ's choice of them through the gift of grace, the work of the Holy Spirit and their conformity to Christ Crucified that bestows on them the gift of martyrdom. They are washed in the blood of Christ and their own blood in a baptism of blood and love flowing from Christ upon the Cross. Like all martyrs it is Christ's power working in them that enables the weak to bear witness to him¹⁵⁵. It cannot be said that the children are separated from the love of God for St. Paul tells us that nothing can separate us from the love of God. (Rom.8.35) God's love is not sterile towards these children but is surely vigorous and active towards their salvation. Why would God allow millions of children made in His image to go into eternity with the stain of original sin or be the play things of the forces of evil. It is beyond doubt that Christ died for all including these children and those who have put them to death.

There is also the theological and philosophical question concerning the personhood of these children. Many procured abortions and therapeutic experiments on embryos continue to be carried out under the pretext that there is no person present but just a developing biological mass. Yet, in the light of what the Incarnation means for all human persons, from natural conception onwards, this denial of personhood could even be considered a heresy. Philosophically, advances in science and particularly our deeper understanding of DNA, show that there is an organised form existing from the very beginning of human life dispelling doubt in this matter and leads us to conclude that there is a human person present from the moment of conception.

In the positive case we have looked into some of the key theological issues and related themes involved in this development that affect the children in some way. Key themes such as Baptism, martyrdom, virgin souls, the name Our Lord has given to the children in the Charism of Divine Innocence, "Mercy Reigns", the children's mission in the Church, righteousness, the Holy Innocents, the Church's role and the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church, have been considered within the context of sacred Scripture, Tradition and Magisterium. Together these seem show a wide spectrum of theological evidence for the Church to seriously consider this development and confidently allow the cause of these children to flower in the Church.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Preface for Martyrs, Roman Missal, 1971.

These theological considerations have helped to prepare the ground for an important goal of this thesis, the Church's mission and her work of evangelization and catechesis. Christ gave a mandate to his Apostles to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel to the whole world. The claiming of the children killed before birth, it seems, can be shown to be fully part of that evangelization process and in harmony with it. Having considered the Church's missionary and catechetical directives in Chapter 5, we are led to understand that 'initial proclamation' has an "irreplaceable" role in the work of evangelization. We can conclude from the possible effects of such a development that the claiming of these children would represent an 'initial proclamation' of the Gospel and a witness to the Christian message universally in an unprecedented way. It would give the Church the opportunity of catechising people from all nations in Catholic doctrine, faith and morals and with the aid of modern means of social communication a formal proclamation by the Church's Magisterium on this issue will certainly be heard all over the world.

It is evident from the theology and pastoral consequences that a development of this nature that seeks to resolve a painful moral issue such as abortion will have repercussions but with the appropriate catechesis to accompany it, raising these children to the Altar of the Catholic Church could have very positive missionary implications bringing spiritual and emotional comfort to millions of people.

The Christian call to salvation and to the Gospel is always via witness. Witness is an essential element of bringing the Gospel to the world. From the theology it appears that the children's martyr witness to the truth can only be facilitated and given voice through the Catholic Church in her universal motherly role towards all mankind. The effects of this proclamation points the successor of St. Peter and the Apostles to a new Pentecostal witness to the nations, giving hope in what appears to be great defeat in face of 'a culture of death.' (EV n. 12) In this darkness people need to see a great sign of hope and experience grace working. Just as the grace from the martyrdom of the early Roman martyrs brought Christianity to the whole Roman empire we should expect again to see great conversions and miracles worldwide through the grace of the martyrdom of these countless virgin martyrs.

In its presentation of the cause of the Church raising these children to the Altar of the Catholic Church, this thesis demonstrates how such a liturgical action could be an astounding missionary outreach towards all nations in fulfilment of Christ's words; "that they may all be one." (Jn 17:22) From the theological evidence emerging from the inspiration and what the Church herself teaches regarding evangelization, there appears to be a sound basis for the Church to respond to this development. The

claiming can contribute much to the Church's missionary work and allow her to go forward in this new millennium with renewed vigour and confidence.

It has been shown that martyrdom and its baptism of blood seems to provide a way for these innocent victims to be incorporated into God's saving plan. Through the claiming, the children witness to the love and mercy of God. In and through Christ it is shown that the children are not forgotten and God takes them to himself. The claiming is a proclamation of love, mercy and justice, it will show forth the intercessory power of the children, once they are recognised as part of the communion of saints. It would constitute a powerful force for the conversion of those involved in the deaths of the children. As 'companions of the first Holy Innocents' and claimed by the Mother Church, the treasury of the merits of their martyrdom may then be drawn upon more abundantly by all peoples worldwide. These new holy innocents, as witnesses to Jesus Christ, 'the Way, the Truth and the Life', when given voice in the universal Church, would proclaim more eloquently his Victory over sin and death. Recognition of their martyrdom would give world-wide testimony to the truth and the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church, proclaiming to the world the right Saviour - Christ, the right authority - the Church and the right doctrine as taught by the Church, giving glory to God and to the Church. It shows the world that the children enjoy the glory of heaven for all eternity in the beatific vision of their God. It proclaims everywhere "Mercy Reigns"!

Postscript

In 2007 the International Theological Commission called by John Paul II in 2005 gave its findings in a document called “The Hope of Salvation for Infants who Die Without Baptism” In it we see the Church is moving nearing to showing that the infants who die without baptism are in heaven as we see in the following statement.

‘The conclusion of this study is that there are theological and liturgical reasons to hope that infants who die without baptism may be saved and brought into eternal happiness, even if there is not an explicit teaching on this question found in Revelation. However, none of the considerations proposed in this text to motivate a new approach to the question may be used to negate the necessity of baptism, nor to delay the conferral of the sacrament.’

We are of course here dealing with those children who are violently put to death in opposition to the word of God and the truth taught by the Church. It is important to show how they are martyr witnesses to Christ, the Way the Truth and the Life. Because they witness to the truth taught by the Church and the truth found in the word of God their witness is also to the ordinary means of salvation for those who have put the children to death, that same witness through the Church is proclaimed universally throughout the whole world and there is the call of the successor of St Peter “Repent and be baptised and believe in the Gospel.” Therefore by the Church claiming these children she does not negate the necessity of baptism but proclaims that necessity universally. They also witness to the source of their own baptism, who is Christ. They are washed in His blood and their blood witnesses to His all saving blood.

The Commission goes on to say: ‘Rather, there are reasons to hope that God will save these infants precisely because it was not possible to do for them what would have been most desirable— to baptize them [with water baptism] in the faith of the Church and incorporate them visibly into the Body of Christ. ‘

It seems to me that the claiming is a way to show visibly to the whole world that the children are incorporated into the Body of Christ and are part of the communion of saints.

The Commission states that all live in some kind of relation to Christ himself in different degrees of explicitness (cf.:LG 16) We have shown that the children put to death before birth have in various ways a conformity to Christ and a solidarity with Him and that ‘since Christ died for all, and since all are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine [*cumque vocatio hominis ultima revera una sit, scilicet divina*], we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery” (GS 22).

The Commission goes on to put forward ways by which ‘ 84. unbaptised infants who die may perhaps be united to Christ.

85. a) Broadly, we may discern in those infants who themselves suffer and die a saving conformity to Christ in his own death, and a companionship with him. Christ himself on the Cross bore the weight of all of humanity's sin and death, and all suffering and death thereafter is an engagement with his own enemy (cf. 1 Cor 15:26), a participation in his own battle, in the midst of which we can find him alongside us (cf. Dan 3:24-25 [91-92]; Rom 8:31-39; 2 Tim 4:17). His Resurrection is the source of humanity's hope (cf. 1 Cor 15:20); in him alone is there life in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10..)

Finally the Commission refers to the Holy Innocents in relation to children who suffer and die:

86. b) Some of the infants who suffer and die do so as victims of violence. In their case, we may readily refer to the example of the Holy Innocents and discern an analogy in the case of these infants to the baptism of blood which brings salvation. Albeit unknowingly, the Holy Innocents suffered and died on account of Christ; their murderers were seeking to kill the infant Jesus. Just as those who took the lives of the Holy Innocents were motivated by fear and selfishness, so the lives particularly of unborn babies today are often endangered by the fear or selfishness of others. In that sense, they are in solidarity with the Holy Innocents. Moreover, they are in solidarity with the Christ who said: "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). How vital it is for the Church to proclaim the hope and generosity that are intrinsic to the Gospel and essential for the protection of life.

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APPENDIX I. THEOLOGICAL CLARIFICATIONS BY
FATHER PHILIPPE JOBERT, OSB., MONK AND
THEOLOGIAN OF SOLESMES ABBEY, FRANCE, ON
THE MESSAGE OF DIVINE INNOCENCE, SURBITON,
SURREY, ENGLAND.

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PERSONAL WITNESS OF FATHER PHILIPPE JOBERT, OSB., MONK AND THEOLOGIAN OF SOLESMES ABBEY, FRANCE.

28th June 2000.

In Nazareth House, between the 16th and the 28th of June a theological investigation into the doctrine of Divine Innocence brought important progress in understanding the truths which are contained in the terminology of the Messages. The conclusions of this investigation will be useful in order to write a document to present Divine Innocence to the authorities of the Church and to the theologians. We need to show to them through theology how the doctrine of the Messages is already contained implicitly in divine Revelation and in the teaching of the Church. A theological explanation of Divine Innocence will make explicit the immediate link between divine Revelation given to the Church and the doctrine of the Messages.

For instance, a list of the themes, which are treated in the Messages, arranged in an alphabetical order, led to a systematic ordering of these themes according to theological regulations. The result was that the Novitiate of the Holy Family appeared as the organic and complete Plan of Salvation, with all the relations between the Holy Trinity [the common work of the three divine Persons], through the Mystery of the Incarnation in the Holy Family and mankind. The Novitiate is a new expression of this eternal Plan, which is to be fulfilled in our times; at the same time, it is clearly expressed in proper words, and personified in the persons of the Holy Family, so that it can be easily understood, and put into practice by everybody.

Another result was that the Claiming of aborted children found its important place in this plan of salvation. The most recent messages manifest the notion of the “Baptism of Love”, which proves to be a key to the full doctrine of baptism which, from the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan, flows from the pierced Heart of Jesus on the Cross to the unborn children, as well as to the Sacrament of Baptism for everyone else.

These two examples concerning the most important themes of Divine Innocence are the main discoveries of our work, among many other clarifications.

Fr. Philippe Jobert

Also, with regard to the overall content of this inspiration and the instrument God has chosen to communicate this message to the Church and to the world, Father Philippe has stated:

“I am not issuing a statement about the authenticity of her messages, but about what is contained within them, from a theological point of view. However, I can say that they not only contain nothing contrary, nor alien to the teaching of the Church, but what they say is a far deeper theology than everything I know, either in classical theology, or in modern researches... There are no books from which she (Patricia de Menezes) could have taken ideas and formulas. There are no theologians, in the present time, who could have inspired her writings. My conclusion is that there is no natural explanation of so deep and so strong a doctrine, which may be called without exaggeration, the “Logic of Love”.

Fr. Philippe Jobert

Terminology.

Just as Holy Scripture is the source of theology, the messages are, in their wording, the source of their own theological explanation. So it is necessary to explain each expression proper to the message, and, inversely to go back to the actual terminology of the messages to grasp all that is contained within them.

1) Divine Innocence:

This is a divine attribute, which means the divine Perfection as opposed to any evil, any sin; the divine Will is perfect as being identical to infinite good, and ordering everything to this infinite Good. God enjoys all that is good, and hates all that is bad and opposed to His Goodness. All that is good shares in His Goodness, and in the same measure, in His Divine Innocence.

2) Christ's Crucified Innocence:

The Son of God Incarnate communicates His Divine Innocence to His human nature. When, as a man, He is crucified by the forces of evil, His Innocence is crucified: that means that these forces of evil which crucify Him, are absolutely opposed to His Innocence. Because His Innocence is infinite Love, this love is Mercy for the sinners' misery, and Justice against their sins in His Heart.

3) The crucified innocence of the children (killed before birth) and of people:

All those who share in Divine Innocence are innocent, in as much as they seek good and refuse sin. The children are innocent in that they have no actual sin, because they do not enjoy the use of their freewill. When innocent people are victims of the forces of evil, their innocence is crucified.

4) Divine Innocence triumphant in human crucified innocence:

As members of Christ, who lives in them through faith and grace, it is Christ who is crucified in their crucified innocence. Because Christ's Crucified Innocence is triumphant, having defeated the forces of evil, the devil, sin, and death by His Passion and His Resurrection, His Divine Innocence crucified is triumphant in our crucified innocence in as much as we share in His Love, Mercy, and Justice.

5) The Novitiate of the Holy Family:

The primitive order of the family, created by God in our first parents and destroyed by their sin, is restored in the Holy Family by the Son of God Incarnate, Jesus, Mary His Mother and Joseph, Mary's spouse. All mankind is contained in Jesus who redeems it from sin and death through His Cross, who sanctifies it through grace, and will raise it at the end of time. Mary personifies the primitive role of Eve as a female person, restored in herself, and Joseph personifies the primitive role of Adam as a male person, restored in himself. Both of them are God's instruments in their genders and roles, motherly and fatherly, to help families to live according to the original order of things: in union in their complimentary roles of man and woman, for the birth and education of their children to the good.

Furthermore, they are associated with Christ in His powers: prophetic, priestly, kingly, to attract people, to bring people to Christ, and to help them live according to the Gospel, in faith, hope, and charity, and in all the virtues. Their action as instruments is real, dependant upon Christ's sanctifying action, as intercessors to obtain grace and all necessary assistance from Him on a human level. Their action is mainly ordered to the personification of their roles, fatherhood, motherhood, not only in families, but in every vocation: even priests and religious are under their influence in this way.

The foundation of this influence must be considered in a comparison with human society. The family is the source of civil society. The Holy Family is the source of the Church, and also her perfection: there is no distinction between the Church and the Holy Family. What the Holy Family is invisibly in heaven, the Church is visibly on earth. Every member of the Church is a member of the Holy Family.

Thus, the Novitiate of the Holy Family is a modern expression of the eternal plan of Salvation. Because our life on earth is a novitiate of the eternal life, the Novitiate of the Holy Family is a training for eternal life under the influence of the Holy Family: it is an ordered Christian life, according to the Gospel, the teaching of the Church: the study of the faith, liturgical prayer, Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, the Sacraments, the Rosary, etc. and in particular divine Wisdom and Truth. It is a fully Christ-centred life under the care of Our Lady and St. Joseph through a commitment to the Holy Family.

The Novitiate does not add anything to the normal Christian life and to membership in the Church but tends to the perfection of this Christian life to which all the faithful are called. Because the Holy Family perfectly shares in the Trinitarian life, through their commitment to the Holy Family, through their perfect fulfilment of the roles of Mary and Joseph as women and men, the faithful pursue the best way of sharing more and more fully in the Trinitarian life and of reaching the perfection of charity in the Novitiate.

In this way, people in every state of life, married, single, priests, religious etc., may, through the Novitiate, root their life more deeply in the Church, when they commit themselves, without any change in their kind of existence, to the Holy Family which is the heavenly summit of the Church. In doing so, they become one Holy Family.

6) Nazareth universal:

"Rabbi, where do you live?" "Come and see." (Jn 1:38,39). Even in our age, Christ lives in the Holy Family. He lives in the Blessed Sacrament on earth and Our Lady and St. Joseph are always with Him to adore Him. He lives in the Blessed Sacrament to pour down His grace on mankind. Mary and Joseph are with Him, united to His sanctifying action; they are instruments of Christ to gather all mankind and to bring them to Christ through their influence upon each gender, male and female, extending their roles to all men and women in the world. Thus mankind becomes the Holy Family, and the world becomes a universal Nazareth in which Our Lord lives.

7) Mother of the Hidden and Mystical Wounds:

According to Simeon's prophecy, the Heart of Our Lady was pierced by a sword of pain, when her Son died on the Cross. Her Heart contained all mankind, because it was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, who as Creator, contains all men as objects of God's Love. Thus her wounded Heart contains all human suffering and wounds in a mystical way ('mystic' is human life as transformed by the Holy Spirit).

Just as the wound of Our Lady's Heart is hidden, so all these mystical wounds are hidden: she offers them to her Son to be healed by His Mercy. Our Lord's wounds in His Heart and body are the ransom of our sins, which in this way are the cause of Our Lady's hidden wound. Her wound is a sharing in Christ's wounds, as well as all human wounds which are mystically contained in hers. Through this sharing, she is united to Christ's Passion, and with her the whole Church, first as redeemed, then as instrument of the fulfilment of Redemption in the whole of mankind.

8) Eucharistic Heart of Jesus:

In the Blessed Sacrament, in Christ's sacramental Body, Christ's Heart is really present, and His Divine Love, as well as His human mercy, is present through concomitance, in His Heart. In heaven, Our Lady is, with her glorious body, associated with her risen Son, she is also united to His sacramental presence through the union of her Heart with Christ's Eucharistic Heart. This union is sealed by the Holy Spirit who fills their Hearts. So her Heart is also Eucharistic. St. Joseph, through his marriage with Our Lady is united to her by the Holy Spirit, in a spiritual union of hearts.

This union makes the heart of St. Joseph a Eucharistic Heart: Joseph and Mary are united in their adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, by the Holy Spirit uniting their Hearts. Since the beginning of the Incarnation, they have always been with Jesus and continue to be up to the present time, when He is present in the Holy Eucharist. Associated with Christ's Eucharistic Heart by the Holy Spirit, their Hearts are acting on mankind through charity, to bring all hearts, male hearts and female hearts, in their separate and complimentary roles, to the centre of the Holy Family, Christ: so all hearts become eucharistic with theirs.

9) The Eucharistic University:

Christ is a living and acting divine Person in the Blessed Sacrament. To the people who submit themselves to His action, He gives light for their intelligence; so that, when they study before the Blessed Sacrament, whatever the subject of their study, they receive knowledge at a higher level because they share in Christ's Wisdom in the submission of their intelligence to His Love.

10) Philosophy of Divine Love:

All philosophies are the result of human research into various things to discover their ultimate causes. When philosophers submit their intelligence to

reality, God, acting through the being of things, gives them a share in His truth; but when they substitute their own ideas for the objective knowledge which is given to them by God through these particular things, their intelligence becomes independent and subjective, and they wander into the domain of error. An error cannot cope with reality, because it does not come from an experience of reality. Objective truth is not complete, when the subjective experience of one's self is not integrated into it. Objective knowledge of subjectivity through experience is the refutation of subjectivism which is the cause of all errors through its independence from experience. Even when a philosophy is true, it remains incomplete, because it does not discover the ultimate cause of being: it is a limited sharing in God's Wisdom.

The Philosophy of Divine Love is the perfect philosophy. When we speak of God's philosophy, the word does not mean the research of Truth, but the identity of Love and Truth in God. Out of His Love, God gave a gratuitous participation in His Wisdom through faith, and in His Truth through Revelation: in this way the human mind is elevated on both sides: subjective and objective. Using its own philosophy, the human mind tries to discover more and more the divine Truth which is contained in Revelation; in this theological work the necessary condition to better perceive this content is a submission of reason to faith: this act of obedience is love, and a participation in Divine Love.

A deeper participation in Divine Love, under the motion of the Holy Spirit, leads to a deeper sharing in Divine Wisdom. Human intelligence discovers new meanings within Divine Revelation, through a perception of the Divine Love Himself by mystical experience. In such a way, the Holy Spirit communicates the Philosophy of Divine Love itself, which is complete and perfect truth. However, this communication is given in the obscurity of faith, and remains always limited by the limits of human intelligence, as well as by the measure of the gift of God. Coming from an experience of God, this philosophy is superior to all philosophies which come only from an experience of things.

11) Song of Divine Love:

Praise is an act of intelligence, which, under an impulse of love, expresses its admiration. When the object of the knowledge transcends the capacity of its comprehension, from its own knowledge it tries to express this transcendence. This link between knowledge and praise is similar to the link between the shared philosophy of Divine Love and the Song of Love. This Song is a pure praise which expresses, through a symbolic language, that which transcends the creature's capacity in its experience of Divine Love. This praise of all divine perfections, all divine works, as experienced by the creature, is admiration, thanksgiving, joy, because God alone is its object. Reparation concerns human sins, even though it is a result of love. All that God has done for mankind, salvation, sanctification, glorification, is a cause of praise and is the source of the Song of Love.

12) Enlightenment:

The submission of all knowledge, drawn from an experience of things, to Christ's light in the Eucharistic University, leads to a new age of enlightenment, the ultimate cause of which is Divine Love.

That which unites the claiming of children killed before birth and the Novitiate of the Holy Family.

The spirituality of Divine Innocence lies upon two foundations: the claiming of unborn children and the Novitiate of the Holy Family. At first sight, it is not easy to find how these foundations are bound together. A first step is taken, when their common opposition to the same evil is understood. The Novitiate is a remedy, which prevents abortion through sanctification of motherhood and fatherhood, the Claiming is a remedy which follows abortion through the salvation of unborn children. However this link is rather negative and further research is necessary along the same lines, to find the positive link between the Novitiate of the Holy Family and proclaiming the martyr status of children killed before birth.

The principle of the Claiming is prevenient grace, which Christ grants to children who are conformed to His death, when they are killed in the womb of their mothers. Through this grace, they are martyrs, giving a silent witness to the Gospel of life. Likewise, the principle of the Novitiate is prevenient grace, which sanctifies Mary's motherhood, and, through her marriage with Joseph, Joseph's fatherhood. Jesus is the source of this grace, which orders to Himself the daily life of the Holy Family. Christ's grace is given through the Sacraments of the Church to transform human activity into Mary's and Joseph's roles by a participation in Divine Love.

Thus, prevenient grace is the link between the Claiming of children killed before birth and the Novitiate of the Holy Family, and this link is sealed by Divine Love in Christ.

Crucified innocence and Divine Innocence – the case of aborted children.

Christ is Divine and Crucified Innocence, because innocence means the state of somebody who has no fault, no sin, no defect in his will. Christ's Crucified Innocence is shared by those who suffer and die in Him and for Him, and above all by those who have not committed any actual sin, that is to say children killed in the wombs of their mothers. They pre-existed in Christ dying for them and for all mankind on the Cross, and Christ did not lose any of those who were given to Him by His Father, except Judas and all those who refuse His Salvation.

The aborted children were created by God's Love and God loves His image in them: He wants to elevate these images of Himself by grace to be His children in the Son, who is His Divine image, because He loves man like He loves Himself. When they are killed by their parents contrary to the divine truth of life, they share in Christ's Crucifixion, and thus they have an external likeness to Christ Crucified, which is the sacrament opening their souls to grace and

uniting them to Him. Their crucified innocence becomes triumphant in Christ's Divine Innocence, and in Christ they have the Father as their Father.

Abortion tries to suppress the filiation of the child, which is the image of the Divine Filiation. Christ is at the same time Son of God and Son of man; when the children are killed Christ is wounded, because He loves them as Himself; His human filiation is wounded and His Mother Mary is wounded in her Motherhood (the Mother Church and natural parents are also wounded). The children are united to Christ as the Crucified Son of God, and so they receive the adoptive filiation in Christ. It is a baptism of love in Christ's Divine Innocence, which includes not only the Sacrament of Baptism but also the Sacrament of Confirmation, making them martyrs who witness to the truth of Christ, Son of God and Son of man.

In the first order of creation, fatherhood and motherhood were chosen by God to be instruments of His Divine Fatherhood in grace. They continue this mission after original sin, on the human level only; but God continues giving His grace to mankind in His Divine Son's Incarnation; He replaces the parents of the children when they deny them as their children, and when they suppress the human filiation, making them images of His Crucified Son, united to them by His Fatherly Love. Afterwards the children draw their parents to this adoptive filiation which they enjoy in the Kingdom of heaven, in the Communion of Saints.

Holy Innocents in our times.

A paper written by Dom. Philippe Jobert O.S.B., monk of Solesmes Abbey France, on the question "Can the Magisterium of the Church acknowledge children killed in abortion as companions of the Holy Innocents, and therefore as martyrs?"

In his Encyclical Letter "*Evangelium Vitae*" (n.99) John-Paul II writes "Your child lives in the Lord". With these words he asserts the glory of the children slain in the wombs of their mothers.

A. Glory:

We must find arguments, which demonstrate how this glory is applicable to these children.

1. They are images of God, having a spiritual soul from the first moment of their conception.
2. They are innocent, not having committed any actual sin. They are deprived of supernatural justice only by original sin. Their natural will is not ordered to the beatific vision.
3. They are violently deprived of human birth, and then of baptism, the ordinary means of salvation.
4. In glory they are innumerable living praises to the gratuitous Mercy of God, and intercessors for their slaughterers and for all sinners.

This glory is acceptable to God because:

1. Holy Scripture reveals His universal salvific Will (Mt. 18,14; 1 Tim: 2,4; 2 Pet: 3,9), to which there is no obstacle in the souls of the slain children.
2. The cases of Jeremiah (Jer: 1,5) and of St John the Baptist (Lk: 1,15) show that God can freely sanctify by grace a child in the womb of His mother. The similar case of Mary is a dogma of faith: viz. the Immaculate Conception.
3. Christ poured out His blood and gave His life on the Cross for all men to be saved. Being the Creator, He contains, pre-existing in Himself, all creatures. With Christ, who is a Divine Person subsisting in an individual human nature, all men, pre-existing in this Divine Person, subsist in His individual human nature. Therefore, when Christ operates, suffers and dies, all men operate, suffer and die with Him. Among them the unborn infants are virtually saved: to be actually saved, it is necessary only that God's grace be granted to them before their actual death, since they have already died virtually in Christ on the Cross.
4. Christ said several times that the smallest ones and children are dearest to His heart. Since this power of salvation is not limited to the Sacraments, He anticipates for these preferred ones the gift of grace, which they cannot otherwise receive.

However, the strongest argument for the glory of aborted children seems to be the Divine Logic of Love. Notwithstanding God's supreme freedom and the gratuitous nature of salvation, there is an extremely deep connection between the mystery of Divine Love and the glory of slain children according to the three levels of God's Love which are distinguished by their effects:

1. Love of charity: through which God wills that all men become members of Christ, united to Him, conformed by adoptive filiation to His image as God's Son in glory.
2. Love of justice: through which God wants the glory of all men as due in justice to the Blood poured out by Christ for them. Love of justice also for the children, cruelly deprived of the ordinary means of salvation.
3. Love of mercy: through which God has given His Son as a ransom to sin and death for the liberation of all men ... and who has a greater misery than these children? Even the greatest sinners, and among them the abortionists, can at any moment until the last second before death, be converted from their sins by grace changing their free will; but these innocents, not having the exercise of free will, are deprived even of this possibility.

God, who is Love, created mankind with the gift of natural life to be the matter for the gift of eternal life. There is no necessity within human nature to receive grace, which is eternal life. Nor is there any disposition to receive grace. There is simply a spiritual ability to be gratuitously elevated to share in the Life of the Holy Trinity, which infinitely transcends human nature.

If human life is supernaturally ordered towards eternal life, this comes only from the divine purpose of Love, which attracts human life to Itself. This purpose can neither be frustrated nor thwarted. If the forces of evil try to obstruct the divine plan by killing the unborn, these forces of evil are overcome by the Logic of Love, anticipating the gift of grace before the death of the unborn. We must not fear exaggeration when we speak of the infinity of God's Love transcending our knowledge (Eph: 3,19), and of the power of His desire for universal salvation, especially in favour of the innumerable innocents killed through abortion.

B. Martyrdom:

Since they are killed, is it possible to call them martyrs? Martyrdom means witness to Jesus Christ, God and Man, borne at the price of human life. It is the most heroic act of faith, hope and charity, implying a voluntary preference for eternal life, and a renunciation of earthly life. The martyrs are perfectly similar to Christ, the King of martyrs, who was condemned to death and crucified for His witness to the truth of His Divinity. This likeness to Christ is the reason for an extension of the title of martyr to those who were killed for their relationship to Christ, even if they were not free to choose Him. The Holy Innocents were slaughtered by Herod, who wanted to kill Christ: formally Christ was martyred in each of them. They were witnesses to Christ as Messiah by their blood, without any possibility of willing it.

We now wish to compare the case of unborn children to that of the Holy Innocents; but is there a relationship between them and Christ as regards their death? Their murderers try to suppress their filiation to a father and a mother. This filiation is an image of the divine Filiation of Christ. Furthermore it is similar to the human filiation of Christ, who called Himself the Son of man. However, the slaughter of the unborn is not aimed at the suppression of Christ's filiation as such, and so, from this point of view, the victims of abortion cannot be considered martyrs.

The same answer can be opposed to the argument based on life. Christ said: "I am the Life" (Jn 14,6). The life of the unborn is an image of, and participation - if remote - in Christ as Life, but this relationship is extraneous to the intention of abortionists.

We cannot therefore use only the subjective likeness to Christ of these children as innocent persons as proof of martyrdom. This proof must be looked for elsewhere to be objective. St Augustine wrote (PLS2,425): "If Christ is Truth, whoever is condemned for truth suffers for Christ, and a crown is due to him." These words concern St. John the Baptist, who was beheaded for the divine truth about marriage. More recently St. Maria Goretti and several other virgins were canonised as martyrs for chastity.

Aborted children are martyrs for the divine truth about life. "Thou shalt not kill." This commandment of God is revealed in Holy Scripture (Ex: 20,13); it is also written in the heart of every human person, as a part of natural law. Those who terminate the life of the unborn willingly transgress this divine law; and so objectively the unborn are rendered victims, although they do not have any opportunity of choosing to die for the truth about life. This objectively confers

on their death the formal notion (ratio formalis) of martyrdom.

Some may wonder how God can consider so important something as tenuous, as frail and as insignificant (in the sight of many people) as a human embryo at the time of its conception. However, it must be remembered that Christ poured out His Blood for the soul, which gives the embryo its spiritual and corporal life. Furthermore, to understand the seriousness of the precept "Thou shalt not kill", it must not be forgotten that human life is the necessary matter for the reception of the gratuitous gift of eternal life. To suppress human life is to prevent God from giving grace. In the light of the Logic of Love, no crime is worse than to render impossible the connection between earthly and eternal life, a connection which is established gratuitously by God's Will.

According to His universal Will of salvation, God prevents the break of this connection by the precious gift of sanctifying grace, at the very moment of the murder of the unborn children. Indeed, these children belong to the Love of God who created them. They belong to the Love of Christ who saved them on the Cross, when they pre-existed and subsisted in His Crucified Humanity. They belong especially to Christ as embryos because, not having the use of their free will, they have no self-determination. They have only human nature, and God's Providence rules immediately over every created nature. Furthermore, they are the closest image of Christ, who reduced Himself to nothing, when He entered the world as an embryo. The Mother of Christ loves unborn children because, when she gave birth to her Divine Son, simultaneously she gave birth to them as pre-existing and subsisting in Christ. When they die, Christ, acting according to His Divine Logic of Love, takes them as members of His Mystical Body, for He lives in them through His grace, which flows from His Heart. His Divine Innocence is crucified, when they are killed. Thus is fulfilled what Our Lord said: "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt: 25,40).

Christ Himself gives a witness to His divine truth about life through their death, because this death continues His own death on the Cross. Mary, the Mother of the Hidden and Mystical Wounds, becomes actually their mother. Because Christ is a martyr in them, while assuming their death as His own death, they are actually martyrs in Christ. The Church, as Mystical Body of Christ, gives a voice to their witness when she proclaims them as martyrs and as her children.

In this way, the Victory of Christ over sin and death is complete and fully manifested by this innumerable crowd of martyrs. Likewise, the grandeur of the plan of salvation, the power of Christ's Blood, and the infinity of the Mercy of God who conceived it, are proclaimed.

Thus God who created the universe and mankind for the glory of His Mercy, reveals supremely this Mercy, not only in giving grace to the unborn before they are deprived of life, but above all in giving them the glory of martyrdom, since their death is configured to Christ's death as a witness to divine Truth.

Through their death as martyrs, they become members of the Mystical Body of Christ who sanctifies them. They are sanctified, not outside, but inside the Church. She is their mother, not through the Sacrament of Baptism, but in

claiming them as her glorious sons through a baptism of blood. She gives their blood a voice proclaiming the divine truth of life, the glory of Divine Mercy, and the power of Christ's Blood.

Christ Himself, as God's Word living in the glorified children, speaks through their blood as a witness to the divine Truth about life. Furthermore Christ lives in the Church as God's Word when the Church speaks. He proclaims the children as members of the Church when she, recognising them as martyrs, identifies their witness with Christ's witness.

God the Father generates His Son when He expresses Himself in His Word. The world was created by the Word of God (Jn: 1,3), who became a man through Mary's "Fiat". The Word of God gives birth to the slain children in the Church, their Virgin Mother, when she proclaims them as her glorious sons: it is a generation by word. As in Baptism there is a sacred word joined to water (Eph: 5,26), which gives birth to God's adoptive sons. As the parents, in the name of their child, confess their faith and renounce the deeds of Satan, Mother Church, when proclaiming slain children as martyrs, confesses her faith in the divine truth about life and condemns the crime of abortion.

Thus, immediate justification of the children in their mother's womb does not in any way deprive the Church of her saving mission, because this proclamation is itself a necessary act of the Church in making their witness heard by all people. Although they already live in the Lord (EV. n.99), they are not yet born in glory, so long as the Church has not asserted this glory. Through this assertion, which gives them birth in glory, she becomes their Mother.

This proclamation is not only a glory for the children, but above all for God, for Christ Crucified, and for the Church. Their witness glorifies the absolute gratuitousness of their salvation by God because they cannot freely co-operate with that salvation.

It is a glory also for us; since in the Holy Eucharist we are in communion with all who are contained in Christ, not least with the glorious martyred children.

Post scriptum: "Can the Magisterium of the Church acknowledge children killed in abortion as companions of the Holy Innocents and therefore as martyrs?"

The whole argument of this cause is founded on the basis of the universality of the Salvific Will of God. It implies two main consequences:

Salvation is considered in its principle, which is the Mercy of God, and the justification which Christ achieves on the Cross: it is God's work. Thus, this work of God has no limits: it is universal in itself, offered to all men. The limits come only from men who resist the salvific power of Christ's Blood.

It is under the light of this universal salvific power, that the case of unborn children must be considered. Not having the use of their freewill, they do not resist or limit the effects of the universality of Christ's power of salvation.

Christ does everything to suppress the power of sin, which He has defeated on the Cross; His victory over original sin is absolute and definitive. His victory over death, which is fulfilled by resurrection, begins in the gift of grace, the resurrection of souls, to the children at the moment of their violent death. The result of this salvific work of Christ for the children is a glory for God's Mercy and for Christ alone, because nothing can be related to human co-operation in it.

The same reason must be invoked for unborn children's martyrdom. Martyrdom is a divine grace, which is given to some persons who co-operate with their freedom; so it becomes a personal act of the highest charity. In the case of the children, there is no personal co-operation, for they have not the use of their freedom. Martyrdom is exclusively a gratuitous gift of Christ, giving of Himself as the King of martyrs, to continue His witness to divine Truth, through all unborn children. There is no place for an exception, either on the part of Christ, or on the part of the children, who conform to His likeness in death to bear witness to the truth about life. This martyrdom is universal in itself, for it is a participation of all children in Christ's martyrdom.

This universality of salvation and martyrdom in the case of unborn children is so essential, that to look for an individual case of martyrdom in one child who is killed in abortion "in odium fidei", would completely miss the point.¹⁵⁶ For in such a case, the universal salvific Will of God and Christ's martyrdom are not taken into account. The charism of martyrdom is reduced to the human level, and to the exceptional human conditions of the violent death of one person only: and the glory of martyrdom would be received by this person, not by God's Mercy and Christ Crucified alone.

In the interpretation of the evangelical revelation of the universal salvific Will of God, there is a continued tradition of progression from St. Augustine, through the Second Council of Orange and the Council of Trent, from a restricted number of the predestined, to a wider and more merciful teaching of the Church. For unborn children, the Church would have to take a step in this direction; and the same is to be said for the definition of martyrdom, according to the traditional lines of the development of Christian doctrine.

Covenant.

'This cup is the new Covenant in my blood, poured out for you' [Lk.22: 20]

A covenant is an exchange of loves. The New Covenant is situated in Christ Himself. In Him God's Love is given to human nature: as a man Christ receives the Divine Being; and when He gives his life in sacrifice on the Cross, He gives His human love to the Father. Thus the original Covenant between God and mankind, broken by the original sin of our first parents, is restored in

¹⁵⁶ The question is about aborted children as such, as considered under the universal formal notion (ratio formalis) of aborted; and therefore about all aborted children and because of abortion.

Christ's blood, because all men of all times are included in Christ, for they pre-exist in Him as their Creator, and subsist with Him in His human nature.

Even though in the original Covenant, mankind refused love to God, God's Love is faithful to His Covenant and continues to keep mankind within Himself, who created and who maintains in being the whole universe. The Old Covenant is an act of God's Love, choosing a people from mankind to start again with Him in an exchange of love. The love that is required from the Jewish people is a human love because mankind is deprived of the original justice, which is grace. The gifts which are promised by God's Love in the Old Covenant are on a human level, to which mankind is reduced by original sin. However, within the promise of a decedent was included the birth of Christ in whom the original exchange of love, where God offered man a share in His Divine Life, would be restored.

Mary is at the same time the summit and the last fruit of the Old Covenant. In her womb Christ was conceived by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The New Covenant, which is the union of the divine and human natures in the Person of the Son of God, starts in her and from her. Since the Holy Spirit as the Creator, contains pre-existing in Himself, all men as objects of the Divine Love, and because the Holy Spirit is present in Mary's heart and moves it, she gave for all mankind's sake through her 'Fiat', the consent of love which makes her the Mother of the Savior. Thus Mary is the link between the Old and the New Covenants, and the human origin of the New Covenant. This New Covenant begins in Mary's womb and is achieved completely on the Cross, by the supreme act of love for God and for all men through which Christ gave His life for them.

This New Covenant in Christ's Blood is continued until the end of the world by the Holy Eucharist which perpetuates and actualizes it everyday. Since His visible presence on earth ended with his Ascension, Christ now gives His sacramental Body and Blood to the Church as a source of divine life. In the Eucharistic communion, the New Covenant is fulfilled in each of the faithful who is united with Christ by it.

This personal union is part of a collective union with Christ who created the Church by the gift of the Holy Spirit to His Apostles, gathered with Mary on the day of Pentecost. The Church is a new People of God, united to Him by the New Covenant through the Holy Spirit who gives birth in baptism to adoptive sons of God. The Holy Spirit realizes in each baptized person the New Covenant achieved by Christ on the Cross for all men pre-existing in Himself. The Church becomes the Mother of the sons of God on earth, continuing the motherly mission of Mary who engendered them pre-existing in Christ.

The source and perfection of the Church is in the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. The original Covenant of God with the first couple instituted the perfect order of things on a human level. This first couple lived, united by Divine Love and shared through grace, the complimentary roles of man and woman. This original order is restored and elevated in the Holy Family, who shares in Christ the life of the Holy Trinity: this sharing achieves the new Covenant between God and mankind at its highest level. It is a transformation of the whole human society in Christ. This transformation in Christ of the

whole human society is made on two levels, according to two levels of life: human life in the family and civil society, supernatural life in the Church. On both levels the Holy Family is the source and model of Christian life, because the New Covenant through the Holy Family reaches all human persons as members of the Church, and as members of the human family and civil society. The Holy Trinity lives in the Holy Family. Jesus lives in those who agree to receive this Trinitarian grace through the Holy Family. Thus the New Covenant reaches human families through the Holy Family, giving to all men the role of Joseph, to all women the role of Mary, and to all their members the life of Jesus, Son of God and Son of man, source of unity.

The Novitiate of the Holy Family is the Christian life at all levels, lived according to the Gospel, in the dependence of the Holy Family. It is a training of progress in virtue to reach the perfection of the New Covenant, which is the reign of Divine Love in the Church, in the family, in civil society. It sanctifies all roles, from the hierarchy of the Church to fatherhood and motherhood in families, in Christ's Unity.

Since Our Lord said that those who are last on earth would be the first in heaven, we may consider the children killed by abortion to have their place at the highest level of participation in the New Covenant. They are perfectly conformed to Christ's Crucified Innocence by their crucified innocence; being the most helpless; the most despised; the most forgotten; the least among all men. God's Mercy is everything in them and reigns perfectly: in their martyrdom they reach the summit of the Novitiate of the Holy Family and they are the preferred children of Mary and Joseph since they are completely identified with Jesus.

Note: God is the Prime Lover in the Covenant, the first effect of the Covenant is prevenient grace: In our first parents, in the Immaculate Conception, in the martyrdom of unborn children.

The theory of limbo forgets and neglects the Covenant. Through abortion the devil tries to undermine the Covenant.

Theological arguments for the martyrdom of children killed before birth.

With regard to the salvation for unbaptised persons in general, the Second Vatican Council says: "Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and moved by grace, try in their actions to do His Will as they know it, through the dictates of their conscience, those too may achieve eternal salvation. Nor shall divine Providence deny the assistance necessary for salvation to those who, without any fault of theirs, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God, and who, not without grace, strive to lead a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them, is considered by the Church to be a preparation for the Gospel, and given by Him who enlightens all men that they may at length have life" (Lumen Gentium n.16)

Concerning children killed by abortion, the Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, according to the Latin translation (AAS. T.87-1995-f.515) says: "You can commend your child to the Father and to His Mercy with hope". These

pronouncements have a divine source in Holy Scripture, where God expresses His desire for the salvation of all men:

Mat. 18:14: “So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”

1 Tim.2:3-4: “This is good, and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.”

2 Pet.3:9: “The Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing towards you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”(RSV)

From these words we grasp that, in the eternal thought and Will of God, the creation of every human person, and the gift of human life, is ordered to eternal life. Because of God’s transcendence, this divine design is fulfilled by the gratuitous gift of a sharing in the divine nature, which is sanctifying grace: 2 Pet 1:4, “You are to share the divine nature”.

In the divine design, the children killed by abortion pre-exist¹⁵⁷ in the divine Word, to be created and to be assimilated into Him by grace, becoming children of God and seeing Him: 1 John 3:2. “We are sons of God even now, and what we shall be hereafter has not been made known as yet. But we know that, when He comes, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is”.

When the Word becomes a man, and subsists in an individual human nature, the children, pre-existing and subsisting in Him, subsist with Him in His individual nature. Everything done and suffered by Christ is also done and suffered by them, who are contained in Him. Thus, they are redeemed and justified in advance, in the death of Christ on the Cross.

All these conclusions are certainties, resulting directly from public Revelation, the teaching of the Church and classical theology. However, they cannot be considered as the ultimate truths about the state of the children killed by abortion, for the Holy Spirit always leads the Church to a deeper understanding of the Divine Truth, once and for all revealed by Christ and His Apostles. The Second Vatican Council says: “The perception of the things and of the words which the tradition conveys, increases either through contemplation and study of the believers who meditate on them in their heart or by interior intelligence of the experience of spiritual realities”. (Dei Verbum n.8)

Private revelations are such experiences. According to the deep and precise commentary of Cardinal Ratzinger about the Secret of Fatima, which gives rules of interpretation on private revelations, we are authorised to consider that these revelations can make certain truths more explicit, which are contained implicitly in public Revelation. They add nothing to public Revelation, which is complete and definitive (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 67), but they draw our attention to some points of Christ’s teaching, which are more useful in our times. The criterion of the value of private revelations is that they point to the salvation of souls in Christ.

¹⁵⁷ St. Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica: 1a Q4 a2; Q12 a8; Q13 a2 et ad 2, a4, a5, a6; Q 14 a5, a11; Q 15 a2; Q18 a4 ad 1; Q 19 a3 ad 6, a4; Q 44 a3, Q56 a2; Q 57 a1; Q 93 a8 ad 4; Q 104 a1; Q 105 a3.

Precisely in our times, the plague of abortion, which devastates many countries in the world, and especially the most ancient Christian ones in Europe, endangers the salvation of souls; for abortion is a “heinous crime” (Gaudium et Spes, n. 51). A private revelation shows the way to restrain, and even to stop this plague. If the Church declares that all the children killed by abortion are martyrs, she will have in heaven a countless crowd of intercessors, who have the power to obtain from Divine Mercy the conversion of their murderers. At the same time, through the voice of their Mother the Church, they will be an eloquent witness to the Divine Truth about life for which they died, from every nation in the world.

This private revelation calls Our Lord Jesus Christ ‘Divine Innocence Crucified’, and shows the victims of voluntary abortion as crucified innocence. Thus they share in Christ’s Victory over sin and death, as members of His Mystical Body in heaven, since they shared in His Cross.

The children have original sin, which is a privation of original justice. They receive a Baptism of Love, according to this private revelation. The meaning of this baptism of Love can be discovered under the light of the Divine purpose of universal salvation. God is Love. God is the prime Lover. God did everything that was possible and even impossible, such as taking the nature of a slave and dying on the Cross, out of His love for men, to fulfil His purpose of universal salvation. Baptism of Love is Christ’s Baptism. Firstly, because Christ, as the Son of God, is Love: “He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Mat 3:12). Then, because Christ, as the Son of man, is baptised: “There is a baptism I must needs be baptised with, and how impatient I am for its accomplishment”(Lk.12:50). This baptism, of which John’s baptism was the prefiguration, is Christ’s Passion, which He suffered for all men, pre-existing and subsisting in Him. “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn.15:13).

Christ gives a participation in His Love, both divine and human, through His Baptism which washes all sins away, and first of all original sin, and justifies by sanctifying grace: “The Love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom we have received” (Rom.5:5).

The Baptism of Love is given by divine Love to every human person who shares in Christ’s Baptism, as He Himself said: “You will be baptised with the baptism I am to be baptised with” (Mk 10:38). This gift is granted in various ways. First, the sacramental way: “We who were taken up into Christ by baptism, have been taken up, all of us into His death” (Rom.6:3). A second way is the witness of a death suffered for Christ, which unites the martyr to Christ Himself through charity: “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I too will acknowledge him before my Father who is in heaven”. (Mt 10:32) “It is the man who loses his life for my sake that will save it” (ibid. 39). If the martyr was not baptised, he receives the Baptism of Love through a baptism of blood. If somebody dies without baptism of water, but having the desire for this baptism he belongs to Christ through this desire which is an effect of the Holy Spirit: he receives the Baptism of Love through a baptism of desire.

The unborn children do not receive the baptism of water. Having only original sin, but no actual sin, since they have not the use of their freewill, there is no obstacle in their soul to the Baptism of Love: their natural desire of happiness is able to receive sanctifying grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit. God is the Prime Mover of human nature and He orders it to Himself implicitly through this natural desire of happiness. Moreover there is someone who makes up for the children's inability to desire baptism explicitly: Mary, as Mother of Christ is Mother of all men pre-existing and subsisting in Christ. The Holy Spirit came upon her (Lk.1:35) to make her not only the Mother of Christ and of all men, but also the intercessor for universal salvation. He dwells in her Heart forever. As the Creator of all men, He contains them pre-existing within Himself as objects of Divine Love and as subjects of the gift of Himself. At the foot of the Cross, Mary's Heart was pierced by a sword of pain (Lk.3:35): She became the Mother of the Hidden and Mystical Wounds, as this private revelation calls her. Being moved by the Holy Spirit, her Heart, moved by the distress of unborn children, prays for their salvation, to obtain from the Father's Mercy the gift of sanctifying grace: thus, they receive a baptism of desire, through Mary's desire for them. The same Spirit moves the Church to continue on earth the motherly mission of Our Lady in Heaven.

Above all, they receive the Baptism of Love through a baptism of blood, which unites them to Christ Crucified. They are killed for the divine Truth about life, which is printed in every human soul, and revealed in the Decalogue: "Thou shalt not kill". They are martyrs to the Gospel of life; for human life is the necessary receptacle of the gratuitous gift of eternal life, according to the divine purpose of Love for mankind.

United to Christ as witnesses to the divine Truth transgressed by their murderers, they are taken by Him as members of His mystical Body, because their innocent death actualises their participation in His own Passion. Christ Himself bears witness and gives His life for truth within them and through them, moved by the Holy Spirit. As Christ perpetuates the memorial of His death in the Mass He perpetuates His Martyrdom through theirs. Thus, their crucified innocence is perfectly integrated in Christ's Crucified Innocence, because not yet having freewill, they are perfectly moveable in their natural will by God's Love. Christ's Blood "which is more eloquent than Abel's". (Heb 12:24) speaks through their blood, which is their visible witness. Finally, Christ is a martyr in them; "When you refused it to one of the least of my brethren here, you refused it to me" (Mt 25:45).

Unborn children are children of God in heaven, but they are not yet born as children of the Church in this world. The Church becomes their Mother, when She claims them as her children from all nations in the world, whatever the religion of their parents. When She utters that they are martyrs in Christ, She gives them birth publicly. Through her voice, their witness reaches the ends of the earth; and they become missionaries, preaching God's word: "Thou shalt not kill", for the conversion of their murderers. Their numberless army will stop the assaults of abortion.

In heaven, they praise God's Mercy, who alone saved them by Christ's merits. The Word Incarnate, who was their witness at the time of their martyrdom, is now their praise because they are forever members of His Mystical Body.

Their thanksgiving for the Baptism of Love which was granted to them, obtains from Divine Mercy a greater extension of sacramental baptism to children who escaped death before birth, because it is the same Baptism of Love under a visible form, the same purification by Christ's Blood, signified by water. The Baptism of Love, source of all baptisms (baptism of water, baptism of desire, baptism of blood) not only does not diminish the importance of the sacramental baptism, but reinforces it in manifesting the necessity for all men to be integrated in Christ's Crucified Innocence triumphant. Unborn children are the first models of this integration.

This private revelation¹⁵⁸ shows explicitly the marvels that are implicitly contained within the Father's Mercy, to whom "Evangelium Vitae" commends unborn children. To understand the Divine Logic of Love which binds Divine Mercy and the martyrdom of unborn children, it is necessary to use the judgement by connaturality, for this logic transcends human reason. Created charity is a participation in Uncreated Charity, and moves believing intelligence in two ways: first, by a perception of things contained within Divine Love; then by an impulse to join a predicate to a subject, to form a judgement about the perceived things. Such a judgement introduces us into a deeper meaning of public Revelation, but also to a genuine interpretation of private revelations, manifesting the harmony between each, which leads to a development of doctrine.

At this point, it is necessary for an intervention of the third way mentioned by "Dei Verbum, n.8 ": the charism of authority given to the Successors of the Apostles and particularly to the Successor of St. Peter to utter a pronouncement about this development of Christian doctrine.

A theological precision about unborn children's martyrdom.

Before His Passion, Jesus says to His Father: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me" (Jn 17:11).

The name of God is "I am" (Ex 3:14). Thus Jesus says to the Jews: "When you lift up the Son of man, then you will recognise that I am" (Jn 8:28).

"I am" means that God is His Divine Act of Being, i.e. the Divine Act of Being in person.

When Jesus, the Son of God, who personally subsists in a human nature, says "I am", He affirms that He exercises His Divine Act of Being in this individual human nature. This human nature began to exist at the Annunciation, and lived a human life from birth to death, then was raised and lifted up to the right hand of the Father. As such, it is situated within human history, and now, after having being once offered in sacrifice (Rom 6:10; Heb 7:28), does not die anymore. It is glorified forever.

¹⁵⁸ Given to Patricia de Menezes, Surbiton England and referred to as the inspiration of Divine Innocence.

However, the Son of God, as a Divine Person who subsists in this nature (and with Him subsist all human persons whom He contains virtually), exercises His Divine and eternal Act of Being in this nature, and makes eternal all its successive states, all its acts, all its sufferings, and even its death. All the history of Jesus, not in itself, but in as much as it belongs to the Word Incarnate, who puts it in being by His eternal Act of Being, is eternal in Him.

Thus, in the Apocalypse, St. John has a vision of “the Lamb as slain” (Apoc 5:6).

From this eternal Divine Act of Being of Jesus as a man (which St. Thomas Aquinas studies in the Summa Theologica IIIa Q.17a2), it follows that the act of offering of Christ as a sacrifice is present everywhere and at every moment, in every Eucharistic transubstantiation performed by a priest, which makes it an actual sacrifice, the Sacrifice of the Cross itself, sacramentally present.

Likewise, the martyrdom of Christ, who bears witness to Truth at the cost of His life, is present everywhere and at every moment in the murder of children in their mother’s womb through voluntary abortion, to assume actually these children into the Mystical Body, making their violent death a continuation of His own eternal martyrdom in His members. For these children were virtually contained in Him when He suffered His Passion. Thus martyrdom of aborted children is actual, as an effect of the eternal actuality of Christ’s Martyrdom as its efficient cause.

The Divine Principle of Martyrdom

St. Maximilian Kolbe is a martyr because he gave his life to save another prisoner from death. He is a martyr for charity. He had not to bear testimony for the Catholic faith at the cost of his life, which is the ordinary case of martyrdom. However, he gave a witness of charity, that is to say, a witness to Divine Charity operating in him. Martyrdom is a charism, a gift of the Holy Spirit. Human love for God and one’s neighbour, is transformed into charity by the Holy Spirit, who is Divine Charity inspiring to give up one’s life for the sake of others, to obtain eternal life. “There is no greater love than to give up one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13). God is not only Truth, He is also Charity.

The principle of martyrdom is in God using man as a witness, i.e. as an instrument of His Truth and Charity. God is free to choose as His instrument somebody who has not the true faith: Among the Ugandan Martyrs there are some Anglicans, who were killed for remaining faithful to God and to His Commandments, like the Catholics did. They are also martyrs because God operated in them to give this witness at the cost of their lives.

Even God is free to choose people who have no faith, to give a witness of love at the cost of their life under the inspiration of Divine Charity, of which they are not conscious. This can be applied to the children killed before birth, to bear

witness, as instruments of Christ, to the Gospel of Life. Martyrdom is founded more upon God's action, than upon man's subordinated operation. This can be reduced to its simplest shape, a consent of will to God's action, even a natural one, because the children have a natural desire of happiness.

Baptism of Love - children killed before birth.

God is Love, and freely loves His human creatures. He gives us a share in His Love. Divine Love flows from the Holy Trinity, in the Person of the Holy Spirit, who is the principle of the human birth of Christ from Mary, and who abides in His Sacred Heart. When Christ was baptised by John the Baptist in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit was seen descending on Him. Rivers of living water, i.e. of Divine Love in the Person of the Holy Spirit, flow from the Heart of Jesus pierced through on the Cross, that is, the Baptism of Love giving sanctifying grace. The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, being a sign of His future death and Resurrection, is the source of the Sacrament of Baptism, where the name of the Holy Trinity joined to water makes a child of God out of a sinner: the Holy Spirit is the principle of this child's second birth in Christ through grace.

When sanctifying grace is poured out in situations apart from the baptism of water, for instance, to Our Lady and to St. John the Baptist, it is equally a Baptism of Love. The baptism of blood of the martyrs and the baptism of desire, are also the Baptism of Love, which flows from Christ's Heart to the martyrs because they have the likeness of Christ Crucified and because it is received in their desire. It is a Baptism of Love because Divine Love crosses every created limit, overflowing the limits of the Baptism of water, to reach all those who cannot receive this baptism of water, and who desire it.

In the case of aborted children, the Baptism of Love reaches them through their likeness to Christ Crucified in a death implicitly for the Divine Truth of Life. Their natural desire for God, included in their human order to happiness, is able to receive sanctifying grace, which makes them members of Christ's Body, living and dying in Him. Divine Love, through this Baptism of Love, of desire, of blood, transforms and elevates them to be witnesses of the Word who is Life, in the Church.

Communion of Saints and children killed before birth.

This article of faith has two strictly connected senses in the Catholic tradition:

1. "Saints" means: holy things, gifts of God, God Himself. In this sense, Eucharistic communion means the reception of the Body of Christ as a food of eternal life.
2. "Saints" means: those who are saints. Sanctity is charity. Charity is a participation in Divine Love. All those who live in charity are united together by Divine Love, which is the principle of their personal charity; Divine Love is in the Heart of Christ, which is the source of grace, through which the saints are submitted to the Holy Spirit by faith and charity. Christ sent the Holy Spirit to

His Church at Pentecost; the Church is a communion: communion with the Trinity, through the Holy Spirit, who is the personal communion of the Father and the Son. Communion with Christ, who communicates to her His Holy Spirit, through a participation in Divine Love, which is grace. Communion of all the members of the Church who receive the truth of Christ by faith, and the eternal life by grace.

The Pope, the bishops and all the hierarchy, are the servants of this communion of the Church through their threefold power, prophetic, priestly and royal: they lead their flock to Christ by the unity of faith, of baptism, of government. They are assisted by the Holy Spirit to maintain and develop this unity within the faithful by their teaching, by the Sacraments, by obedience to the Vicar of Christ: so the Church is a communion of all the faithful receiving the same truth, the same grace, the same path to Christ, the same Christ, the same God.

The saints in heaven enjoy the plenitude of this communion and are perfectly united with God. They are united to Divine Love, which communicates all divine gifts to men on earth. Among them, unborn children killed before birth are prominent members of the communion of Saints, sharing, in Divine Love, by their intercession, this communication of forgiveness, of grace, of all kinds of divine and human goods in Christ. For they enjoy, through their union with Christ, participation in His vision and Charity, His threefold power, prophetic, priestly and royal, for the good of the whole Church on earth. Their martyrdom makes them prophets as witnesses to Truth, priests as offering themselves to God (in union with Christ), victims in the sacrifice of their life; kings, as servants of the Creator and free from all creatures. The Church enjoys the effects of this power, when she acknowledges and glorifies their martyrdom, which makes them powerful intercessors for all sinners.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the claiming of the slaughtered children.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass perpetuates the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. All the parts of the rite are ordered to this central act, in its sacramental representation, and to its manifestation.

The liturgy of the Word begins with a penitential act. We regret publicly our sins; not only our personal sins but the sins of all mankind, which have offended God. Among these sins is the monstrous slaughter of children in the womb of their mothers. We ask God for His pardon, for His Divine Mercy for us, for all sinners, and for the perpetrators of these crimes of abortion. Divine Mercy has cleansed the children who were conceived with original sin, in associating them with Christ's Sacrifice as martyrs; and they are intercessors for the forgiveness of all sins.

Kyrie Eleison: The Mercy of God is proclaimed at the beginning of the Mass as the principle of the total mystery of salvation: the glory of the children is the most perfect effect of Divine Mercy.

The Gloria in excelsis Deo is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity for its work of salvation. By God's Love, His good Will towards men brought peace to the world: peace between God and men by the atonement of all sins realized by Christ Crucified. The children killed before birth, which are a huge part of mankind, are not excluded from this work of salvation. They enjoy eternal peace in glory with Christ their Savior who took away the sins of the world.

The Opening Prayer gathers all the wishes of the members of the liturgical assembly: these wishes converge always to grant eternal life, through grace and the practice of virtue, especially charity for God and for neighbour. To the children killed before birth, God granted grace at the moment of their death to enable them to be witnesses to the Gospel of life in Christ; they pray for us in the Communion of Saints, so that we might join them in eternal life through the gifts of Divine Mercy.

In the Liturgy of the Word we are taught the truth about God's mysteries, and especially about salvation. This work of salvation, which Christ achieved on earth, is to be completed with our co-operation during life, because all divine gifts come to us through our earthly life. The children killed before birth fulfil all this at the moment of their death, when Christ takes them into Himself, to bear witness to truth through their innocence, especially to the truth about life.

The profession of faith summarizes this teaching in our assent to truth. We believe in the Father who in His image created us and the children killed before birth. We believe in Our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, Image of God, who became man for our salvation, was crucified, died, and rose again: all men are comprised in this work of salvation, and even the children: Seated at the right hand of the Father, He will judge everyone. Those who have killed the children will know that which they perpetrated against Christ (Matt 25:40). We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Giver of life, the earthly life, the eternal life, which the children enjoy forever among all the other martyrs. The Holy Spirit who has spoken through the prophets, speaks through their prophetic role of witness to Divine Mercy. We believe in the Church, who gives birth to them, as their Mother, through a baptism of blood, which purifies them from original sin. We look for the resurrection of the dead: the children will be raised for the life of the world to come, among all the saints.

In the liturgy of the Eucharist, we first offer the matter of Christ's Sacrifice, as a sign of our offering of ourselves with humble and contrite hearts, in order to be received by God, which is the meaning of sacrifice: sacrifice for sins, because we are sinners. We need the forgiveness of our sins, through Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross. Sacrifice of communion, when having been reconciled with God, we share in the sacramental Body and Blood of Christ, which unites us with His offering of Himself to His Father. Holocaust, when being united with Christ through Love we are consumed by the fire of the Holy Spirit in Christ's Sacrifice, for the praise and glory of the name of God. The children are sharers in all these levels of sacrifice, as innocent members of the Body of Christ Crucified and of witnesses to Divine Mercy for them.

The prayer over the gifts is a recapitulation of all offerings, in order to please God, and to obtain His grace for the whole Church: which is united with the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving of the children in the heavenly Church.

The Preface is the entrance into the Eucharistic Prayer. It is a praise of all the marvels operated by God, and ends in the angelic praise of the Divine Sanctity. The children in heaven sing with the angels the praise of Divine Mercy, which made them participants in this divine Sanctity.

The Eucharistic Prayer, following the Sanctus, continues this praise of the divine Sanctity. Uniting the whole Church on earth and in heaven and especially the martyrs, among whom are the children, it prepares for the imminent actualization of Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross. This expresses a fervent hope for peace in this life, preservation from damnation and for admission among those God has chosen as His children in heaven.

Then, the account of the Last Supper shows and realizes what Our Lord said and did to perpetuate His Sacrifice, through the transubstantiation of the bread and wine. In His Sacrifice, all men are contained, and even the children, who are forgotten because they are not born. In Christ they offer themselves; in Christ they are consecrated in Truth as His witnesses, and their salvation is operated because they are innocent. From the actual and sacramental presence of the Sacrifice of the Cross, its power radiates all over the world and throughout all centuries, to unite all children killed before birth to Christ Crucified and Risen, as martyrs.

After the Consecration, the Church unites her own offering in thanksgiving for Christ's Sacrifice, celebrating the memory of the whole paschal mystery, and of all the gifts flowing from it. To her offering of the Holy and immaculate Victim, she unites the sacrifices of Abel, Abraham, Melchisedec, the co-operation of Angels, and the memory of all the dead, praying for them.

At the end we pray for ourselves, sinners, to be admitted among the Apostles and martyrs: the children are with them, not out of merit, but thanks only to God's Mercy and Love through Christ. And they share in the glory, which Christ gives to His Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever and ever.

The communion rite begins with the prayer which Christ Himself gave us to obtain pardon for our sins: 'Our Father who art in heaven': the children are your children and they proclaim holy Your name. In them, You reign, and Your kingdom has come. Your will is done in their innocence. They enjoy in heaven, through the beatific vision, Christ who is the Bread of those who believe on earth. Having been forgiven, they forgive their murderers, and pray for their repentance and salvation, because God overcomes the crime of the murderers by His Mercy, and calls them to share in the glory of their victims. No temptation, no evil, can reach these victims, who are free forever, having been saved from original sin and made saints. Being preserved from all anxiety, they help us to wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ, for the glory of His kingdom, where they are happy.

Being reconciled with God through the gift of His peace through Christ's Sacrifice, we ask for an extension of this peace flowing from heaven where the

children enjoy it, to the whole Church, and to all men, through a communion of love, publicly signified. Thus we are prepared for communion with the Body and Blood of Christ: He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and who grants peace. There is no longer an obstacle to our union with Him: one word only from Him is able to heal our sick souls. Our union with Christ in Eucharistic communion is also a communion with all the saints who are members of His Body, especially with the little martyrs, our forerunners in heavenly glory.

After communion, in union with the triumphant Church, the faithful, filled with thanksgiving and praise, express these in the final prayer. Their thanksgiving comprises the glory, which has already been given to all saints and to the children by Divine Mercy.

At the end of the Mass, the benediction of the Holy Trinity opens to all the promise of the divine merciful gifts, through which the children have already been united with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion:

When the Mass is celebrated with reference to the claiming of the children, there is a development of doctrine, by making explicit what is implicitly contained in living Tradition, as it is done from Holy Scripture. Both Scripture and Tradition are the Word of God coming to us in two ways, in complementarity. The Holy Spirit gives assistance to the Church to express the Truth in the liturgy and gives the impulse to develop the understanding of the Eucharistic mystery from the liturgical rites and texts, with regard to the children's involvement in Christ's Sacrifice.

Thanksgiving in Mass and aborted children.

Eucharist means thanksgiving. It was instituted by Christ as a memorial of His Paschal Mystery. Because this Paschal Mystery completely fulfilled the salvation of mankind, as such it is only a matter of thanksgiving for what has been perfectly done once and for all. Now, and until the end of the world, the Holy Eucharist is celebrated, to obtain the effects of the Paschal Mystery in the history of the whole of mankind for all times and everywhere: this prayer is united to the offering of the sacramental Holy Sacrifice.

However, for all the effects which have already been achieved the Eucharist is also a thanksgiving: for all the saints in heaven, for the good deeds in the Church, for the gift of grace which is the source of every holiness, for all the means of grace which have been instituted and inspired by Christ in His Church.

Among these effects, we find the glorious martyrs who are the aborted children and who have shared in Christ's Passion and share in Christ's glory. Thus, they are united to the thanksgiving in the Mass, as is shown in the holy liturgy for the First Holy Innocents. They are active members in the Church's liturgy as it is written in the Apocalypse. They give thanks to God and to Christ for their glory, and they praise and glorify the Divine Mercy.

Aborted children are fully and actually united to the Paschal Mystery in the Mass as members of Christ Crucified and Risen, they offer it in Christ, and Christ offers it in them as a Sacrifice of thanksgiving.

Kings, Priests, Prophets - aborted children's participation in Christ's threefold office.

Apocalypse 1,6:

"...has made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

Apoc. 5,10:

"... has made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on earth".

Apoc. 20,6:

"...they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with Him..."

What is written in the Apocalypse about all saints may be applied in a special way to unborn children:

1. The royal power consists in a dominion of people uniting their work for the achievement of the common good. Through the acceptance of their martyrdom and of God's gratuitous Love, the children are freed from original sin and from all sins, free of the persecution from those who kill them, free of all obstacles to their desire for eternal life and to their will to serve God only, free of every human power: absolute freedom. Moreover, being united by charity to Christ the King, they share in His royal power over all men. Being submitted to His Will of salvation for all men, their will is united with His Will, to achieve this salvation with the co-operation of their prayer. Having reached the end by the highest act of charity, martyrdom, they will judge all men with Christ and with the Apostles to whom Christ promised thrones of judgement.

2. The priestly power consists in mediation between God and sinners to reconcile them. It brings to men the gifts of God and it offers to God the sacrifice of men for the repentance and the expiation of their sins. Christ is the perfect Mediator. Being God, He gives God's grace, and being a man, He offers Himself on the Cross, through His obedience to His Father and the acceptance of suffering and death, as a Sacrifice for all sinners who are contained in Him as creatures in their Creator. Being sinless and perfectly innocent, He is loved as a man by His Father, and all men are loved in Him.

All those who are members of Christ through baptism share in His priestly power, firstly receiving grace from Christ's plenitude of grace, then obtaining grace for others through the communion of Saints. Charity is a participation in the Divine Love of Christ who loves every man and wants his salvation. Accepting the trials of human life, they share in Christ's Passion. They participate in reparation for their sins and the sins of others to actually apply the atonement once and for all fulfilled by Christ on the Cross.

Through their martyrdom, baptism of blood, unborn children killed before birth have this priestly power. They are united to Christ Crucified. They are united with the Heart of Christ, source of grace and forgiveness; they are, by their innocence, privileged intercessors for all sinners and especially for those who have killed them.

3. The prophetic power consists in speaking in the name of God against all sins, and for the service of God and the salvation of men. Through their witness, given by their blood, unborn children killed before birth are prophets. The Divine Word Crucified is speaking through them, through their crucified innocence, uttering a witness to Truth. Being united to Christ, the Divine Truth, by their blood, they are precursors of the future manifestation of Christ's glory. Everybody, having truth written in their soul "Thou shall not kill", is able to hear and understand their witness against evil and for righteousness.

Our Lady of the Hidden and Mystical Wounds.

I. Preliminary paper.

Our Lady is always linked to the Church as Mother: each time she is wounded, the Church is wounded. The motherhood of women and the fatherhood of men are wounded and when their roles are disordered children are wounded, their innocence crucified especially in abortion. Our Lady comes close to her children, to their crosses, which are the Cross of Christ. She instinctively knows that every wound can be healed by the power of Christ's Wounds: this healing which flows from Christ through the Sacraments of the Church. The awareness of the dignity of their roles stops the wounding. Each time the divine order of things is distorted by sin, the result is crucified innocence and many wounds: which effect the whole body of Christ. Our Lady delights when she sees our progress because it is our progression in her Son's Divine Innocence. Because of her continual intercession down the centuries for us, her Son orders us to honor her Hidden and Mystical Wounds (Mystical is intimately united with the Mystical Body, the Mother Church).

II. The eternal divine purpose was that all things be subjected to God, so that He may be all in all (1Cor 15:28): which means a union between God and His human creatures. In creation, our first parents were subjected to God by sanctifying grace, and united to Him through faith, hope, and charity. Being created in the image of God, they were free in their love of God just as God loved them freely. There was an operative alliance between God and mankind. It was operative as an exchange of mutual love. However, our first parents broke this alliance, rejecting subjection to God's Wisdom and Will, and they preferred to seek independently their good according to their own thought and desire.

God's Love, being unchanged, wants the restoration of the primitive alliance, but at a higher level. This new alliance would be, not only operative, but entitative: which means that in One Divine Person, the Son, divine nature and human nature would be united by one Divine Act of Being. However mankind's consent is required to draw up this new alliance.

As a partner in this new alliance, God chose a Virgin from Israel, to become the Mother of His Son in human nature. Her own Conception was Immaculate, as preserved from original sin by a plenitude of prevenient grace. Her answer to this first divine gift was the consecration of her whole person to God in remaining Virgin. So she was perfectly subjected to God. The mystery of the Incarnation was revealed to her by the Angel: because Incarnation will be realised through her and from her as the Mother of the Son of God Incarnate, God, who respects human freedom, waits for her consent. However, her consent is not only personal, but also given in the name of the whole of mankind. The aim of the Incarnation is the salvation of all mankind, the union of all men with God. In her Immaculate Conception, she had been made adoptive daughter of God in a personal gift of the Holy Spirit. Now she will receive the Holy Spirit at the same time as a personal gift making her the Mother of God, and also, as a universal gift making her consent, the whole consent of mankind.

The Holy Spirit is identical to the Divine Act of Being, common to the Three Divine Persons. In the Divine Act of Being, all men are contained as creatures pre-existing in their Creator. Mary also is contained in the Divine Act of Being, and she is one with all men as such. When the Holy Spirit comes upon her (Lk 1:35), first uniting her will to Himself, her free consent is made as one with all mankind's will to accept the Incarnation. Thus, when she says: "Let what you have said be done onto me" the new alliance between God and mankind is prepared, through Mary's mediation, on the side of mankind. Then, the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, actualises the generative faculty of Mary, when the Son takes her as His mother, through that same Divine Act of Being. From her, He assumes into His Divine Person an individual human nature; when Mary conceives the Son of God as her Son in human nature, the new alliance of divine nature and human nature is completed.

The Son of God Incarnate, Jesus Christ, subsists in His individual human nature, which is a part of His Person. He exercises His Divine Act of Being in it and through it. All men pre-existing and contained in this Divine Act of Being, subsist and operate with Christ, in it and through it. When Christ acts, suffers, dies, rises, they act, suffer, die and rise in Him and with Him.

Mary, being the Mother of Christ, is the Mother of all men contained in Christ. As the Holy Spirit remains united to her operating love in her Heart, she is united to all men by the same motherly love, which unites her to Christ. Old Simeon foretold her that a sword of sorrow would pierce her Heart (Lk 2:35): which was the prophecy of Christ's Passion, but also of all sufferings of mankind, her children, through the centuries. Her Compassion wounds her Heart: being the Mother of Christ, who is Divine Mercy, she is the Mother of Mercy, wholly and perfectly merciful. She is united to her Son in His work of Mercy by the Holy Spirit. She bears in her Heart all the wounds of her children especially in our times when the plague of abortion breaks all bounds, her Heart is wounded by the millions and millions of children killed before birth.

Mary is subjected and ordered by the Holy Spirit to Christ, not only as her Son, but also as the Word, in whom she will see God. After the Assumption, being glorified in soul and body, she sees in the Word all men, her sons, actually living and suffering. At the time of Christ's Passion, the object of her Compassion was, not only Christ, but all men contained as pre-existing in Christ. Then, her Heart was wounded, not only by Christ's sufferings, but also by the sufferings of all mankind in all times.

Historically, her Compassion is ended and replaced by a sharing in Divine beatitude. Christ who, through the Holy Spirit, was the principle of her Merciful Compassion at the time of His Passion, now uses her as His instrument to apply, to actually suffering men, the effects of her affective mercy: His Divine Act of Being, being eternal and co-existing for all times, joins her historical Compassion as an instrumental cause to its present effects. This explains why Our Lady appears sometimes weeping and expressing her sorrows as present, showing her Heart as wounded by mankind's sins and sufferings. That is a presence as a cause to its actual effects. Being the result of the mystery of Christ's Divine Act of Being operating through her, this presence is mysterious: that is the reason why Mary is called the Mother of the Hidden and Mystical Wounds.

Mary's Motherhood.

The Blessed Virgin became the Mother of all men, when she gave birth to the Child Jesus, who contains them, pre-existent in Him as their Creator, and subsisting with Him in His individual human nature.

Through her Immaculate Conception, she is perfectly submitted to the action of the Holy Spirit, Divine Virginity, who establishes her in the state of virginity; this state means that she belongs to God only, and it excludes every human union with anybody else. Thus, she is the proper instrument of the Holy Spirit to conceive Christ virginally. However, she is more than an instrument, which only disposes a matter to the principal agent's action; because she communicates her human nature to the Son of God in His Conception. She does not co-operate only to the efficient causality of the Holy Spirit, but she gives something from the corporeal substance of her virginal person: her causality is motherly, because it is not only operative, but above all entitative, towards the Child Jesus.

Her motherhood towards men is fulfilled in giving birth to them in Christ, and in giving birth to Christ in them. The Holy Spirit, who came upon her to engender Christ in human nature, operates through her virginal person, in order to engender men as adoptive children of God. She acts, not only to submit men to the Holy Spirit's operation, but also and above all to give them a participation in her spiritual and corporeal glory. Her spiritual glory consists of first in her vision of God in the Word, to whom she has been ordered by the Holy Spirit from her Immaculate Conception, and then to engender Him in His human nature. Thus, she gives a participation in her vision in helping men to believe in Christ. Likewise, her spiritual glory consists also in her charity under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. She gives a participation in her charity in attracting

men to love Christ and to humble themselves unto the Child Jesus' likeness. Finally, she gives a participation in her corporeal glory after her Assumption, in granting all kinds of healings to suffering men as an instrument of Christ's Divine Act of Being. Such is her motherly causality.

According to these participations in her glory, the Blessed Virgin is Mediatrix of all graces, co-operating to Christ's Priesthood. Only God is present through His action in the human soul. Christ, as the Son of God, gives a sharing in His Divine Act of Being (2Pet 1:4) through His individual human nature. This gift consists in a communication to human souls of His sanctifying grace, of which His human soul is full. Grace is a disposition to share in the Divine Act of Being, which Christ alone can communicate as the unique Mediator and Priest, because He is simultaneously God and man. The Blessed Virgin, who is only a human person, co-operates through her motherly causality to this priestly causality of Christ, in helping men to receive grace. Her Mediation is situated on the side of mankind: she is God's instrument to dispose men from outside, to receive all graces, which Christ gives inside. Because what she communicates is a participation in her personal glory, her Mediation is motherly: men become actually her children, when they become children of God in her Son, the Child Jesus.

Certainties regarding the fate of children killed in the womb.

It is certain that the primitive order of human life to the participation in the divine Life is restored in Christ as in its principle, because within the hypostatic union of the divine nature and of the human nature, and as a result of this union, the humanity of Christ is full of Grace: "de plenitudine ejus omnes accepimus". The Baptism of Christ, showing the Holy Spirit descending upon Christ, means that "rivers of living water" flow from His Heart when His death on the Cross has taken away the sins of mankind, which are the obstacles to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

It is certain that these "rivers of living water" flow through Baptism and through the other Sacraments. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is given by Christ, is a Baptism of Love giving participation in the Divine Life, through grace, to all those who share in Christ's death and Resurrection.

It is certain that "we who are baptised, die in the death of Christ and we rise in the Resurrection of Christ", because the baptism of water is the sacrament of the death and Resurrection of Christ. It is certain that Christ is Sacrament, and those who are configured to Christ's death, share in His Resurrection through the gift of glory: such is the Baptism of blood which is a baptism of love because "there is no greater love than that a man give his life for his friends"(Jn 15:13), as Christ did Himself. This love of the martyr is a participation in Christ's Love for His Father, when He died for divine Truth. Such also is the baptism of desire, because this desire is consent to grace which God will always give, a desire for the conformity to Christ's death and resurrection in Baptism.

Such is also the case of the children: their natural desire for happiness which orders them implicitly to God (but not to the vision of God) is a gift of God who loves them because He created them in His image; this natural desire opens their souls, who have not committed actual sins, to the reception of sanctifying grace, but original sin is an obstacle. It orders them to a human happiness linked with the body, limited to this life, separated from the order to eternal life which is bound to conformity with the Paschal mystery of Christ. This conformity comes about for them through the violence, which is inflicted on them, against the divine truth of life. It is a conformity to Christ the Sacrament who gives them sanctifying grace through a baptism of love and blood.

Martyrdom – children killed before birth.

I. Every martyr must be a witness for divine truth who is Christ. Historical circumstances make this witness particular; for instance, for Christ's divinity, for fidelity to the Catholic Church, for chastity etc.... Then martyrdom is a vocation given by God to some persons, and a special grace of fortitude is joined to this vocation, to help the freewill of the martyr to accept death. It is Christ who helps them through this special grace.

What is unique in the children's martyrdom is that, not yet having the use of their freewill, they are under God's direct motion in their natural will for happiness. Thus Christ takes them into His Crucifixion when they are killed. Living in them through grace, He offers them in His own offering to the Father and they share in His Sacrifice for all sinners. They are perfect instruments of Christ's charity: this complete instrumentality is the particularity of their martyrdom. Their martyrdom, their witness to the truth about life, is completely identified with Christ's martyrdom and witness: this is the highest level of martyrdom because it is a glory only for Christ through them and with them as human persons.

II. It is a certainty that God created mankind in order to transform human persons into His children in His Son. In the beginning God gave grace to our first parents through a gratuitous gift. Human nature is spiritual and free, God also is Spirit and free. A man is able to know the Creator from His creatures, but not in Himself because God transcends infinitely man's natural capacity for knowledge. Man, having in his natural will a desire for universal happiness, can desire to know God, because He desires an unlimited good which is not contained in this limited universe, and because he knows that God is infinitely good. However, he cannot desire to see God, because the sight of God is proper to God and transcends his nature. To see God demands a certain equality with God.

God is His Act of Being, and sight of God is a communion of intelligence in this Act of Being. No creature, even the most perfect angel is its own act of being, but rather receives, as a subject, a limited participation in the divine act of being. Limited being is created from nothing, and united with a subject, which is distinct from it. So it cannot be united to the Divine Act of Being which is simple and infinite. There is no proportion between God and a created

intelligence, between absolute simplicity and composition, between infinity and limitation. Sight is a perfect assimilation of a being with another being in knowledge, at every level of knowledge. Sight of God is out of reach for all created intelligences, but not impossible.

Through original grace, God made our first parents able to become capable of His sight, giving them a participation in His divine nature. Their human life was the ground where the seed of eternal life was sown; this ground was necessary to the divine seed: the natural capacity of knowing God, and the natural capacity of desiring a universal good. Human life is required to receive the divine Revelation and to be elevated to a desire for eternal life. However there is no order in a created nature to a knowledge and a hope which are above this nature: a gratuitous gift is absolutely required to elevate the created nature to desire the beatific vision of God.

From the revelation of original sin in Genesis we know that our first parents received this gratuitous gift and lost it. We know also the eternal and loving Will of God to elevate human life through grace to eternal life. Although there is no order to eternal life in human life, the free Will of God, through a gratuitous transformation, and through a participation in divine nature, orders human life to be the necessary ground for the birth and for the development of eternal life in a created person. This transformation unites angels and man to God.

This is the summing up of "Evangelium Vitae": not only is human life the most perfect natural gift of God, which depends upon God alone for its birth, its conservation, its end; but its end is a divine destiny. Not only is human life sacred because it is given by God and the human person is made in the image of God, who possesses it, but above all because it is ordered to become, through grace, a participation in the divine Life of the Son of God.

It is this divine Will, operating within human life to order it to the Son of God, which makes any attack against human life an offence to God's Love and an attack against the Son of God.

In the Incarnation, the Son of God assumed in Himself human life, to restore within mankind the eternal life, which had been rejected by original sin. The Will of God who orders mankind to His Son is not suppressed by original sin; only the disorder of original sin and of all the actual sins which flow from this disorder must be destroyed by the Redemption. Christ's obedience and death restore within mankind the gratuitous order to eternal life. The Son of God, Crucified and Resurrected, contains in Himself potentially the whole of mankind, the human life of all men, as ordered by Himself to Himself. Only the human person's freedom is able to prevent him through actual sin, from actualizing by grace through the sacraments the order of human life to eternal life in Himself.

Unborn children, who have no actual sins, but only original sin, which is a privation of actual order to eternal life, do not set any obstacle in themselves to the gift of grace by Christ, who contains all plenitude of grace for them. When their life is threatened by abortion, the gratuitous Will of God who freely orders human life to eternal life in Christ, is thwarted. When they are killed, Christ, who is the end of their human life by virtue of the Will of God, is killed in them

by the suppression of the necessary ground for eternal life. They are perfectly united to Christ Crucified, because they are martyrs for the Gospel of life. They are martyrs, because they are innocent. The children's death is part of the original punishment of original sin; their death is transformed into martyrdom, first by violence, which makes them victims, because they are innocent; then by Christ Crucified, who as a Priest, offers these victims to His Father, because they are united to Him. Their violent death deprives them unjustly of the potentiality of being justified by Christ in Baptism, just as the violent death of Christ deprived Him of the human power of His corporeal nature of giving grace. This deprivation of human life was unjust, and the Resurrection is due to Him, with His priestly power of giving grace. Christ Risen raises the children to eternal life, as a just reparation for their deprivation of life as a necessary ground for grace. 'Through Him, with Him, in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all Glory is yours Almighty Father, forever and ever. Amen'.

Their glory becomes a witness to Christ's Resurrection. What is due to them is not grace, which is absolutely gratuitous, but human life which is a gift to them from God as a ground for grace: here is the reason for their justification before death. Christ Risen makes them His members in glory, as they were His members in death, through a unification with Him as witnesses of the Gospel of life: it is justice for Him who died for them. It is justice for them; not because of merit but because of need. They participate in Christ's merit, and receive a compensation because of their deprivation of life as a necessary subject of grace. They are not able to exercise or be responsible for free will because they have not reached the age of reason.

This justice remains subordinated to Mercy because they have no right to grace itself. (But we must remember that if God is so generous with grace for millions of people who have committed grave sins, why would His grace suddenly dry up for the millions of children who have not committed any actual sin?) The Gospel of life is the resurrection to eternal life, through God's mercy and love operating within human life to justify mankind in Christ.

They are martyrs because they witness by their silent blood to Christ as the end of their human life, necessary subjects of eternal life in virtue of the gratuitous divine order. Christ's Blood actualises in their blood their passive and active redemption. Passive, because they receive grace from Christ to whom they are united. Active, because their natural will, elevated by grace, submits itself to the Will of God, uniting them to Christ Crucified. Thus they show in themselves, in their crucified innocence, the Son of God Crucified, who is their end; and they are immediately united to the Son of God through the beatific vision.

Additional notes:

1. The definition of martyrdom which is implied in the previous demonstration is a perfect unity with Christ Crucified, manifested by innocence and violent death. This definition broadens the classic definition of a witness of faith at the price of life, to a witness of other virtues, which unite to Christ Crucified: chastity (Maria Goretti), charity for neighbour (Maximilian Kolbe). The basis of this broader definition is the word of Christ: "Nobody has a greater love than

the one who gives his life for his friends." (Jn 15:13) In this case, it is not only a witness to a definite truth (marriage: St. John the Baptist - Supremacy of the Pope: English martyrs etc...) but to Christ Himself who is Truth. In the case of unborn infants the truth "Thou shalt not Kill", points to life as a necessary subject for eternal life and to Christ who is eternal life. "I am the way, the Truth and the life"

2. The basis of the whole demonstration is a certainty which is to be added to the recorded certainties: (See page 88) the Gratuitous Will of God who orders human life through grace to be united to His Son by the beatific vision.

3. Being composed of a spiritual soul and a material body, a human person can change by itself, or can be changed in itself. After death, the soul is separated from the body, which is its necessary subject for change. Being simple, the separated soul cannot change and cannot be changed. So, the transformation of a human person by grace from a sinner to a child of God must be done between the conception and the death of this person. It cannot be saved after death. It is the complete human life, at the same time spiritual and corporeal, which is ordered by God to eternal life through grace. The grace must be received before death, or in death in the case of a baptism of blood. It is the person, soul and body, who is ordered by God to His Son.

God has a person to person relationship with the human person, a relationship of love with the whole person. It is the whole person, body and soul who is saved by Christ, according to the Will of the Father in the Unity of the Holy Spirit. For this Trinitarian relationship the soul must be there at conception.

Witness.

A witness is an instrument of God as Truth. Everybody who has received the gift of faith, objectively through Christ's Word and the teaching of the Church, subjectively through the grace of believing this Divine Truth, is a witness, chosen by God to proclaim the Good News of eternal life. Because Christ is living in him through grace, which is the seed of eternal life, and which contains in itself the power of witnessing to the Truth against any created opposition: hostility of enemies, weakness of the believer. Martyrdom is the visible effect of invisible Divine Truth, manifesting itself through a human witness, subjected to truth by the grace of faith, at the cost of earthly life.

This meaning of witness and martyrdom is convenient to Christ first as a man, and to everybody who is in whatsoever state, a member of Christ (who is Truth) and His instrument. The Church, the Apostles, the martyrs, all Saints, all prophets, every Christian who says the Creed, all are witnesses, because it is the Holy Spirit who speaks through them. "Do not be anxious how you are to speak, or what you are to say; for what you have to say will be given to you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Mt 10:19)

Even this meaning of witness can be applied to the children killed before birth, who cannot speak: The Holy Spirit bears testimony through their death, which

is martyrdom for the Gospel of Life, through Holy Scripture and the voice of the Church.

Consecration in the truth.

Having been redeemed by Christ, the children belong to Christ. Christ is Life, that is to say, the divine life as it is shared at different levels, from the highest, divine life to the lowest, human life. "Thou shalt not kill" is the truth about life. Christ is the truth of life; He came to witness to the truth at the price of His own human life, which is a perfectly innocent life. He continues His witness to the Truth in every innocent life killed contrary to the divine truth of life. He is the truth of life who takes upon Himself the children killed by abortion, to bear witness to the truth in them. Being vindicated by belonging to Christ, by Christ who is truth, they are consecrated in the Truth, through their blood, which is witness to the Truth in Christ's Blood.

Glory.

Glory consists in being known and loved by others. It presupposes some excellence in the person whose glory is in others. In the Trinity, the Son is the Glory of the Father, because His is the image expressing the transcendent perfection of the Father; and the Holy Spirit results from the common Love of the Father and of the Son as their personal communion, achieving their glory.

We give a created glory to God when we acknowledge His transcendent perfection, when we express it in our praise, when we love Him for it.

Everything which is done and made by God, glorifies Him, because it expresses something of His perfect goodness and makes it known and loved; as the Son glorifies the Father who engenders Him, and the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son glorifies the Father and the Son. Through grace, we share in this Trinitarian Glory by charity which is the gift of the Holy Spirit; and in heaven, by the vision, in the Word of the Father.

The claiming (of children killed before birth) by the Church gives glory to God's Divine Mercy and His Divine Justice and to Christ who is the Incarnation and the manifestation of these divine perfections in the Redemption, for the Church who obtains in this way millions and millions of members praising for ever God's Divine Love.

Duty of the Church regarding aborted children.

Christ sent His Apostles to teach the Gospel to all nations and He poured on them His Holy Spirit so that their words would reach the minds and hearts of all men. The strength of the mission given by the Lord, and the impulse of the Holy Spirit, the deep desire for the salvation of all nations, charges the Church with the duty of preaching Christ's truth, and the whole truth. Revelation is entrusted to her, not only to transmit and to conserve it, but also to penetrate and to develop its contents, because the Holy Spirit leads her always into the whole truth. Thus the divine plan of salvation becomes more and more known in itself, and in its numberless effects.

Among these effects, which are newly manifested in our times, is the glorious martyrdom of unborn children. The glory of this martyrdom sets in a greater light the Divine Will of universal salvation, the sanctifying power of Divine Love, through the baptism of Love flowing from the pierced Heart of Jesus, and the infinite Mercy of God which cannot be prevented by the children's death, by the cruelty of men, or by the limits of the ordinary means of salvation. It shows Divine Justice operating for the sake of the innocent. It shows the power of Christ's Blood which sanctifies the blood of the slain infants, and the power of the Divine Word speaking through their silent witness to Truth. It gives the Church the glory of an immense army of martyrs who are her children. It manifests the supreme importance of the grace, which is given through baptism and the other Sacraments.

This truth of the martyrdom of unborn children has remained implicit up to our times, but it becomes explicit as a genuine part of public Revelation, as a remedy to our contemporary evils: the enormous increase of abortion, the loss of the sense of sin, the despising of the human person, human life, and above all the complete ignorance of the loving design of God for men: elevation of men to the dignity of becoming His children in the Son.

To preach this truth, by the acknowledgement of unborn children as companions of the First Holy Innocents especially in liturgy, answers a pastoral need of our times: not only in the Church but even in non-Christian societies. To mothers who have lost their child by abortion, and who worry about its fate and perhaps what they might see as its vengeance (in Japan mothers and fathers try to placate the child as if it were an evil spirit), this truth proclaims its happiness and its pardon (of original sin and pardon towards the parents), and gives peace, joy and gratitude to God.

Furthermore, this truth, showing how abortion is distasteful to God by the glorification of its victims, establishes a divine obstacle in the way of abortion.

Thus, on the pastoral level as well as on the doctrinal level, the Church has a duty to teach the truth of the martyrdom of unborn children, as an explicit part of the revealed truth of salvation. The glory of these martyrs is already and actually achieved by God, but its manifestation by the Church activates the minds of the faithful to know this truth and to accept what they know. Finally, so that they can rejoice in it and to give thanks and glory to God for it!

Weakness.

St. Paul says that the power of God is manifested in human weakness. Christ is the synthesis of divine power, and of human weakness which was fulfilled in the Crucifixion.

It may be argued that the power of God is more glorified according to the measure of weakness of its human instrument. The weaker one is, the more the power of Christ is manifested. Who is weaker than the children killed before birth¹⁵⁹? Thus, the triumph of Christ's Victory over death is supreme in them because their victory is not due to their activity, but to Christ acting in them without any resistance on their part (cf. Gal 2:20). In them the instrumentality of martyrdom is perfect: in them, sin and death are completely defeated and they share in Christ's Victory in resurrection: 'they live in the Lord'.

Helplessness and Innocence.

There is a link between helplessness and innocence. The first word means that the children in the womb are deprived of all means of action for themselves: they are only beings at the beginning of life. Their spiritual soul has a body, which, being only an undeveloped embryo, is not yet an instrument. They have no use of their freewill, either for good, or for evil. They are also deprived of supernatural justice by original sin, which is the greatest helplessness. Thus, they are innocent of any actual sin, which is the meaning of the second word, innocence.

Sacrifice.

In the liturgy of the Old Covenant, there were three kinds of sacrifices:

- 1) Sacrifice for sins: atonement, the lowest level.
- 2) Sacrifice of communion: which unites men with God, when they share in the flesh of the offered victims.
- 3) Holocaust: when the whole victim is burnt as an oblation to God: the highest level.

This was a prefiguration of Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross. The three levels are united, when He dies for the expiation of all sins of mankind, when He offers, as a man, Himself to His Father and gives grace to men, when through burning charity, He gives His life for all those whom He loves. This link between the three levels of sacrifice is especially visible in the Holy Eucharist, where Christ is at the same time a priest and a Victim, offering Himself for the sins of mankind, giving Himself as a food of grace in the eucharistic communion, and being a holocaust of thanksgiving to His Father, consumed by the fire of Divine

¹⁵⁹ 'How is it still possible to speak of the dignity of every human person when the killing of the weakest and most innocent is permitted?' E.V. 20; 'The one eliminated is a human being at the very beginning of life. No one more absolutely innocent could be imagined. In no way could this human being ever be considered an aggressor, much less an unjust aggressor! He or she is weak, defenceless, even to the point of lacking that minimal form of defence consisting in the poignant power of a newborn baby's cries and tears' E.V. 58

Love. Divine Charity changes into a holocaust of love, the various holocausts, which were perpetrated by the forces of evil throughout the centuries:

- 1) The persecutions against Christians at the beginning of the Church, because they refused to offer sacrifices to the Roman Emperor.
- 2) The persecutions against Jews by Hitler, because they are the chosen people: St. Edith Stein.
- 3) The situation of legal abortion, which is a persecution against children, who are potential members of Christ through human life, and who are chosen by God's Love to be victims for their murderers and for all sinners.

The transformation of holocausts of evil into holocausts of charity is operated by Divine Love through the obedience of the heart to the Divine Word and to Christ's grace. That is the meaning of this sentence of the Psalm, which was quoted by Our Lord when He said to the Pharisees: "I do not want holocaust and victim but an open ear": the true sacrifice is a submission of intelligence and will to God, which is rooted in the heart and is inspired by the Holy Spirit: it leads to a complete gift of one's self even to martyrdom.

The martyrdom of unborn children is such a holocaust, bearing a witness to God's Love, to the Divine Life, through their death, and to the Divine Word, who said "thou shalt not kill", who created human life as an image of God, who gratuitously elevated this humble human life to be the subject and the instrument of Divine Life, in the first Creation, and in the Incarnation. Everyone will be able to hear and to understand this witness, when it is spoken by the Church for their sake, because this witness of the Church, saying that the children are martyrs, comes from the Word Incarnate.

Limbo, no.

The theory of limbo 'limps' because it relies upon divine Justice only, and not upon Justice and Mercy together. God is at the same time Justice and Mercy: so there is never divine Justice without Mercy.

Ps 88:15: 'Justice and equity are the foundation of thy throne,
Mercy and faithfulness stand in front of thy face.'

St. Augustine, in his polemics against Pelagianism, insisted on the absolute necessity of sanctifying grace through baptism to obtain eternal life. These polemics arose from the custom of baptising children. As children have not committed actual sins, what is removed by baptism is original sin. Thus, unbaptised children who die with original sin, cannot receive eternal life. St. Augustine thought that they were excluded from salvation. The Council of Carthage (418) followed this position which can be found also in the Councils of Lyons (1274) and Florence (1439).

However, many theologians thought that children could not be condemned to hell, because they did not commit any mortal sin. As they could not be admitted into heaven, the theologians imagined a third place, limbo, where they would be deprived of the beatific vision, but not punished otherwise. So they would enjoy some natural happiness.

This opinion was considered traditional enough to be sustained by the Bull “Auctorem fidei” which condemned the pseudo Council of Pistoia. Against the Jansenists, who followed the strict opinion of St. Augustine, Pius VI declared (1794) that limbo must be admitted as a place where those who die with original sin only, are deprived of the beatific vision, without any punishment by fire.

This position is common among theologians, and is considered as a teaching of the Church, because nothing about the fate of children who die unbaptised is explicitly revealed in the Word of God.

However, the concept of limbo is founded upon two negative concepts: no heaven, no hell. It is possible to found a concept upon a reality, but not a reality upon a concept and all the more so upon negative concepts: so limbo has no more reality than a purely intellectual conception. What’s more, the reasoning, which leads to the existence of limbo, is a result of human logic. However, divine mysteries are not connected to each other by human logic, but by divine Logic. Because ‘God is love’ (1Jn 4:9), we know that the divine Logic is the Logic of Love.

- Inasmuch as divine Love is Charity, God wants the salvation of all men, loving them as Himself, and so He offers sanctifying grace to all those who are not opposed to His love: unborn children are unable to resist.
- Inasmuch as divine Love is Justice, God is just to His Christ who poured out His Blood for all sinners to be saved, and to atone for all sins: thus the original sin of unborn children is washed out in His Blood.
- Inasmuch as divine Love is Mercy, Christ is Divine Mercy made flesh to take upon Himself all human miseries and to communicate His plenitude of grace to all who believe in Him and receive His baptism. What Christ Resurrected operates in His believers through the Sacraments, He operates also in those who die before they are able to believe and to receive the Sacraments. At the moment of their natural death, Christ appears to them in His glorious human nature, as the vanquisher over death for all men through His Resurrection: spontaneously they adhere to Him through their natural desire for life, and Christ gives them eternal life. Their death paid the debt of their original sin and Christ’s Mercy made them sons of the Resurrection (Lk 20:36) through His grace, elevating their natural desire.

Such is the Logic of divine Love, which is transcendent. It is out of reach to human reason, but the Holy Spirit, who alone knows it, reveals its conclusions through the gift of wisdom to those who become His instruments through a complete abnegation of their proper wisdom and a perfect submission to divine Wisdom.

There is an analogy with the Holy Eucharist: just as in this Sacrament the risen body of Christ is a food of divine life, so also when Christ Resurrected appears to dying children, He is to their desire a food of divine life, for He said: “I am the resurrection and the life” (Jn 11:25).

In the case of children who are killed in abortion, there is a previous action of Christ's Mercy for them: He unites them to His own martyrdom, as witnesses for the Gospel of Life. They are martyrs in Him and are consequently glorified in Him. In comparison with the Mass, they are united to Christ's Sacrifice at the moment of Consecration, whereas other children, victims of miscarriage, are united to Christ's glory at the moment of communion to His glorious Body; the former are intercessors for the latter.

Against Jansenism.

Among those propositions of Jansenius Augustinus condemned* as heretical, the fifth one is: "To say that Christ died and poured out His blood absolutely for all men is semi-pelagian". The censure mentions that this proposition "derogates from divine love".

Indeed the truth of Divine Love for all men is explicitly asserted in many sentences in Holy Scripture, because it is divine love which created them; therefore the gratuitous design of universal salvation which results from this love reveals that God created men only to call them to share eternal life. His Son became a man and suffered His Passion unto death on the Cross so that all of them would be saved and none be lost. He has expiated all the sins of all men in all times, and has superabundantly merited for them the heavenly beatitude. Nobody is excluded from His redeeming action, not even the smallest human beings such as the children killed before birth. When the Church condemns the heretical proposition, which reserves salvation only to the predestined, the Church opens the door of the kingdom of heaven to these children.

It is not necessary to look at the precise meaning of the Pauline texts, which evoke predestination, and in particular the beginning of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

When St. Paul writes that we have been chosen before the creation of the world, that we have been predestined to be adoptive sons of God in Jesus Christ, he wants first to affirm the liberty and gratuitousness of the divine design of salvation, for every choice is a free act. Then he means that this act is eternal in God, and determines the creation of the world and of men. It is a design of His love, the aim of which is the manifestation of the glory of His grace. This design was achieved through a redemption, which His beloved Son obtained: the remission of sins is fulfilled. Finally, this design tends to unite everything in Jesus Christ.

All these assertions are positively universal, and, so to speak, they exclude all exclusion. For an exclusion would be contrary to Divine Love who wants only the good for men; it would be opposed to the glory of grace which transforms men into adoptive sons of God; it would be unjust also to Christ who poured out His Blood for the salvation of all those who were entrusted to Him by His Father.

Predestination heresies exist because the meaning of the words “predestination” and “choice” were interpreted univocally, and not according to analogy, which is due to God’s attributes. As God is Love and Primary Cause, He determines in advance human persons, who are secondary causes, to eternal life, while respecting their freedom. On the other hand, whereas human choice is exclusive (for instance, the choice of a spouse in marriage excludes every other person), the divine choice is inclusive. Within the universal call to eternal life, each person is an object of choice by God, proper and unique, and of an irreplaceable vocation. Thus, the mystery of predestination which some, such as Calvinists and Jansenists make a scarecrow, is in fact the kindest of all the mysteries: “Eternally, I have loved you”. (Jer:31.3).

Like all others, the children killed before birth have been eternally loved, and predestined to adoptive filiation in Jesus Christ, and to eternal life.

Another condemned sentence, from Jansenius Augustinus says: “Some divine commandments are impossible to comply with, by just persons who want to do so, and strive according to their natural power in the present state: grace is missing in them in order for them to comply with these commandments” (Prop.1)

This error proves a complete misunderstanding of God: to impose impossible precepts would be a perverse cruelty, because it would be impossible not to commit sin. God orders only what is necessary to salvation, and is in proportion to the capacity of those who must obey: He has no other purpose than mankind’s salvation, and plans everything for its achievement. On the contrary, grace is never lacking: God always gives the necessary assistance for the fulfilment of His Will by men. The reason is that eternal life is an end which infinitely transcends human power. God cannot give up His creature to its limits, and to its weakness, which hinder it from tending towards and reaching its ultimate end: all the more as He created it for this end, which He alone can give.

Divine Love is continuously acting. He grants His grace, which is a created participation in His divine nature (2 P:1.4) increasingly, to all who accept it. Free consent to this divine gift is the only condition required from man, in order to be saved: it is an obedience of faith, and of hope, and of charity. This truth is the contradictory sentence of the fourth condemned proposition of Jansenius. It is concerned with adult persons, who can consent or resist, because they enjoy freewill.

The case of the children killed before birth is different: they have not yet the use of their freewill. They are moved naturally by God, who acts directly upon their natural will. This natural will is deprived of supernatural justice by original sin, but it tends naturally to good under the divine motion. Thus their soul is capable of receiving the gift of grace without any resistance when God mercifully wants to grant it to them, because they are not inclined to actual sin. In this natural passivity, there is no contradiction to propositions 2 and 3 of Jansenius, which concern only the situation of freewill towards grace. These are not about the natural will of the children, which is necessarily moved by God to good.

The conclusion which logically results from the condemnation of Jansenism by the Magisterium of the Church, when it is compared with the case of children killed before birth, is that, as much from the gratuitous Love of God, who wants the salvation of all men, as from the children, who are immediately submitted to His salutary operation without resistance, nothing stands in the way of the Magisterium acknowledging them as actually saved by Christ's Blood.

* Note: Bull "Cum occasione" of innocent X, 31st May 1653, DZ. 2001.

Brief explanations of key theological themes in relation to the children.

Justice: gives everyone what is due to him. Unjustly deprived of earthly life through, which God gives to all His means of salvation, the children killed before birth are granted, at the very moment of their violent death, grace and charity in Christ, by Divine Justice which makes them just and worthy of beatific vision and resurrection.

Mercy: removes misery from those who are deprived of the necessary means of living. Christ, on the Cross takes upon Himself the whole misery of death and damnation of mankind to atone for all human sins, through His obedience; and His Mercy includes the children who are innocent, but have original sin: they are deprived by violent death of all means of salvation, which is their special misery. Christ's Mercy takes upon Himself this misery in uniting their innocent will with His Sacrifice through the gift of His grace.

Love: wants for another all goods as for oneself. God's Charity loves all men as Himself, and will give them a participation in His own life of knowledge and love in the beatific vision. Only those who do not accept Christ as the way to eternal life are excluded of their own accord from this sharing in God's beatitude. The children cannot resist the Divine Love in Christ, who communicates His grace to them in a baptism of Love at the moment of their death.

Law: orders people to their good. The ancient law was given to the Jews who, like all other people after original sin, are under the bondage of death and deprivation of grace. This law leads only to an earthly justice: it is external and does not transform a sinner into a child of God. The new law is the Holy Spirit who leads a person from within through Christ's grace to eternal life. The new law changes the sinner into a child of God. It is a gratuitous gift,

which gives an inner justice; through this justice, the child of God is proportioned to his Father in heaven, and receives the beatific vision as a reward of his love. The children, who are deprived of this justice, and of all means of receiving it, according to the Logic of Divine Love, are introduced into the reign of the new law, by Christ's Mercy justifying them in His own Sacrifice on the Cross, making their death a sacrifice in His own death, and opening to them the kingdom of heaven. Not having the use of their freewill, they obey God's law in natural love, and this natural love is transformed by the Holy Spirit into Charity, the new law.

The Word of God:

is a commandment which shows the way to please God through love, and invites all to follow it. This word is spoken to human freedom and requires obedience, which is true love. The children have this natural commandment written in their souls, and they obey it in their natural will. The Word Incarnate takes them up into Himself. They obey His Mercy which elevates them to share in His own Sacrifice at the moment of their death which is perpetrated against the Word of God; "Thou shall not kill", and so they become witnesses to the Word of God.

The Will of God:

is the divine design of salvation, fulfilled in Christ's Sacrifice. The natural will of the children is innocent, although deprived of grace, and conformed by Christ's Crucified Innocence to the Divine Innocence, at the moment of their death: their will is united to the Will of God by Christ's grace and Christ's obedience.

Blood: the blood which flows from Christ's pierced Heart includes the children in a baptism of blood, which makes them martyrs in Christ's love for His Father and for all mankind, at the moment of their death.

Baptism: this baptism of blood is first a Baptism of Love.

**Objections to the claiming of children killed before birth as martyrs.
(April 2004)**

When St. Thomas Aquinas studies a question, first he meets objections, but he does not answer the objections immediately. Previously he gives the answer to the question; and often this answer cuts objections at the root because they are false, they are destroyed by truth. At the end, St. Thomas refutes objections, only if they comprise something, which is not already refuted by his answer to the question.

For instance in the case of Limbo; theologians have established this notion, not from Revelation, but from reasoning; which was based on the necessity of baptism, and on the freedom of assent to faith, exclusively. Having no use of freewill, no possibility of being baptised, the children who die in the womb of their mother, cannot receive grace and go to heaven. Having not committed any actual sin, being deprived of grace only by original sin, they are not condemned to hell. Limbo is not heaven nor hell; only a negative concept, not a reality.

If we explain that children killed before birth are martyrs in Christ, because Christ exercises His own martyrdom in them, out of His Mercy and Justice, all objections are destroyed; because they are formulated as though Christ is not living anymore, as though His sacrifice is not eternalised by His Divine Act of Being and present to the children, as though His Mercy forgets these children and is not powerful enough to save them etc...

When a member of the clergy objected, preferring Limbo, which was taught to him in the seminary, I explained to him the role of Christ in the martyrdom of the children, and he could not give any answer.

Thus, most of the time, we must first explain the truth, which by itself excludes objections. Afterwards, sometimes it may be useful to add a refutation on a particular point. If we begin to take account of objections, we settle on the adversaries' ground and we are in a position of weakness, prisoners of their thought. On the contrary, we must draw them into our position through an explanation of the truth, which they cannot object to.

1. Children killed before birth are martyrs, because they are killed as living sons or daughters (filiation), and as such they are images of the Son; Divine Filiation is present in them (through their parents) as the principle of their natural filiation. Christ Crucified is a martyr in them, because He is the Son of God and Son of man, attacked in His Divine Filiation in them, by abortion. Christ's martyrdom is eternalised by His Divine Act of Being, and is present to every aborted child to exercise His witness to His Divine Filiation (Lk 22:70) in them, and He associates them to His witness through the gift of faith which justifies, acting in their intelligence and in their natural will, to order them by grace to God, as sons of God.
2. Children who die before birth (before baptism) are virgins, because they are innocent, having not committed any actual sin. The Holy Spirit, who is Divine Virginity is present as the Paraclete in their innocent natural will to order it to good. Through their innocent death, they are conformed to Christ's innocent death. The Child Jesus, whose Childhood is eternalised by His Divine Act of Being, and who died on the Cross for their salvation when they were pre-existent in Him, is also Risen and glorified with the Father in heaven*, seeing them and loving them as His images of innocent dying Childhood, as virgins. With His Father in their Divine Nuptiality, He

sends their Divine Virginity to make of them in Him sons of God who cry out “Abba, Father” (Rom 8:15)

*Rom 6:10. “By dying, He is dead to sin once and for all, and now the life He lives is life with God”

Thus children killed before birth are martyrs under the influence of Divine Filiation, and naturally aborted children (miscarriage) are saved under the influence of Divine Virginity.

The Philosophy of Divine Love.

Preliminary paper.

Philosophy of Divine Love means Divine Wisdom as the principle of the free designs of Divine Love. God’s Wisdom is transcendent, and only through Revelation can we know its statements (Rom 11:33). The beginning of the Epistle to the Ephesians shows that the divine purpose of calling man to communion with God is a pure object of faith, out of reach of human intellect (Faith and Reason n.7). The word “Philosophy” here has an analogous sense, not to be confused with human philosophy. Only theology is able to explain this divine philosophy, and theology relies completely upon faith and Revelation.

1. Human philosophy, and more precisely, metaphysics, is the science of being as being. Like all sciences, and more than any other, metaphysics has its foundation in the sensitive experience of material being, because we have no other experience of being. Without this contact with being, metaphysics would only be a game of concepts and words, absolutely empty and meaningless. Our objective experience of the existence of a spiritual soul in man relies upon the sensitive experience of the effects of intellectual operations, which is possible at the age of reason, not before. Even the being of an embryo is not a matter of experience. God being Spirit, creation is not a matter of experience. Divine Love, which is the principle of creation, is not a matter of experience. God, God’s Love, creation, the spiritual soul at the moment of conception, all these realities are objects of faith. All that the Philosophy of Divine Love expresses about the invitation, addressed to man as soon as he comes into being, to converse with God, is an object of faith, revealed in both Testaments, confirmed by Tradition and by the Church.

To be recognised as a person, the embryo must have a spiritual soul which would be a matter of experience; being spiritual the soul is not a matter of experience; thus it is not a subject of metaphysics, which is founded upon experience, and which transcends empirical data through abstraction; but empirical data are absolutely necessary to be abstracted and to become metaphysical subjects. The Philosophy of Divine Love, transcending every human experience, and still more, every material experience, does not

replace the lack of an experience which is necessary to prove the presence of a spiritual soul at the moment of conception.

The Philosophy of Divine Love proves that God does not leave man without a philosophical way of demonstrating the presence of a spiritual soul at the moment of conception. This is the way shown in the speech of Pope John Paul II to the Academy for Life in February 1998 (published in *Osservatore Romano*). If a man is able to produce intellectual acts at the age of reason, and if no substantial change has been made in him from the moment of conception, the spiritual soul which is the principle of intellectual acts is present in him from the moment of conception. The proof of no substantial change is the experience of the complete substantial program (DNA genetic code) and of all substantial elements in an initial state in the embryo from the moment of conception, up to the age of reason. There is a unity of person throughout the years. In the eyes of God the time between conception and the age of reason is seen as one moment, when in our eyes we see a long passage of time, and God sees each person all at the same time.

The messages of Divine Innocence speak of the Philosophy of Divine Love. This is a supernatural experience, a fruit of a gift of the Holy Spirit, the gift of intelligence. This supernatural experience, rooted in the Divine Act of Being, does not replace the natural experience, rooted in the material act of being, known through the five senses. As well as in Christ, who has two natures, the divine nature does not replace the human nature: both are necessary. We must not confuse our supernatural experience with our natural one.

If human philosophies fall short, there are two reasons:

1. Most of them are false: Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Marse, Nietzsche, Whitehead, Wittgenstein, Russell etc.... because they have lost every contact with reality (idealism, subjectivism, agnosticism, etc). The philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas founded on the act of being, and sensitive experience, which Pope John Paul II recommends in the Encyclical *Faith and Reason* n. 97 is able to demonstrate the presence of a spiritual soul from the moment of conception, on the natural level.
2. All of them are limited to this natural level, and are unable to show the transcendent end to which man is called by God's gratuitous Love. This end is only known through Revelation and faith. The source of this Revelation is the Philosophy of Divine Love, Divine Wisdom itself.

The Philosophy of Divine Love

Introduction:

Philosophy means the research of wisdom. We call wisdom a knowledge of the ultimate causes of things, with a purpose of conformity of life with the universal order which rules them to their end. In modern language philosophy is an abstract study concerning things, man, science and ethics. The most

abstract parts of philosophy are metaphysics, which is the science of being as such, and logic, which rules the right order of concepts and words, i.e. the use of reason. They are complimentary, because logic teaches how to build the science of being out of the intelligible material supplied by the sensitive experience of reality, and abstracted from its individuality by the power of intelligence.

This philosophy is the highest activity of human reason. Because human reason is situated within a body, and because, being immaterial, it has no contact with the material world, it uses the way of the bodily senses for its information about things. Every real thing exercises an act of being, which gives reality to its nature and to its subject. Through the influence of this act of being, a thing is active on human senses, which are passive and empty, and receptive of information coming from things to them. Everything known by human reason comes to it through this way, even the most universal and abstract notions. Because human intelligence is made for being, it has a natural ability of understanding being, and whatever concerns being. When there is in a thing something which has not its principle in the thing, human reason naturally tries to find outside it the origin of this element; this natural sense of causality leads human reason to seek beyond the visible world an invisible cause of its being, which it does not explain by itself. Hence, the fundamental question asked by Heidegger: "Why is there something, instead of nothing?" The answer is God, the First Cause of being, because God is Himself His Act of Being. In such a way, God is known indirectly, through things, as their ultimate Cause. His existence is proved as the Prime Mover, and even as the Prime Lover.

However, this knowledge of God, because it comes from very imperfect and limited things, remains infinitely inferior to God Himself. Through analogy, we are able to purify and to elevate these human notions about God, but a huge gap subsists between the human science of God and God's science of Himself.

Divine Love fills this gap through a Revelation of this Divine Science, which is objective faith. It consists in a divine knowledge communicated through human concepts and words. Thus, faith is received by human reason. Faith informs human reason with a Truth, which infinitely transcends its power of understanding. However Divine Truth attracts reason to an instrumental use of analogous concepts, in order to inform it more and more deeply, more and more completely and give it a limited, but better understanding of its contents. The result is theology: a science, which is a participation of the Divine Science revealed in objective faith. Theology remains inside faith, as an analysis of its contents; it elevates philosophy at the level of faith, as an instrument, which penetrates faith; like a microscope with which a scientist penetrates into the contents of matter.

Though theology is so much higher than philosophy, it remains infinitely inferior to the Divine Science itself. There is also a character in theology which, as a subordinate science, makes it paradoxically inferior to philosophy because the latter is equal to its matter, and masters its study. That is the reason why, when a comparison is to be established between supreme human knowledge and divine knowledge, the use of the word "philosophy" is more appropriate

than “theology”. It is possible to build an analogy between human philosophy and divine philosophy, because both of them are supreme in their order and equal to their matter.

Because Wisdom implies, not only knowledge, but also an order to good, Divine Wisdom, which through Love, orders everything to the Divine Good, may be called “Philosophy of Divine Love”, which infinitely transcends the philosophical knowledge of Divine Love, obtained through the research of human reason. Its Truth is Love defined. Its Logic is a Logic of Love, mysterious and inscrutable, hidden in Divine Innocence and revealed in Christ’s Divine Innocence.

Our knowledge of the Philosophy of Divine Love results from the gift of wisdom, a gratuitous effect of charity. It implies an absolute abnegation of independent thought, and an absolute obedience of intelligence to the obscure light of Divine Love, which is the summit of faith, and a participation in Divine Wisdom.

Three levels at which the knowledge of God is realised.

1. Divine Science of God by Himself: as Being, as Life, as Light, as Love, as Mercy, as Justice.
2. Supernatural Science of God: through Revelation in human concepts and words, God gives a gratuitous sharing in His own divine knowledge: the name of this knowledge is Faith. Because Faith is received by reason which is ordered to understanding, reason submits its natural knowledge of God and things (which is philosophy) to the divinely revealed Truth of faith, to understand its contents: the result is theology, which is a supernatural science of God. Supernatural in its matter: God as revealed. Natural in its process. In this case, philosophy is a mere instrument of faith for its analysis, and the theological result remains at the level of faith, like the statue is at the level of the art of the carver who uses a chisel to carve the marble, not at the material level of the chisel; because the chisel is only an instrument through which the action of the art of the carver passes using only the cutting property of the chisel to introduce his idea into the marble.
3. Natural science of God: through an induction climbing up from things as beings to their First Cause, which we call God, we reach an indirect and analogous knowledge of God, which is philosophical. This knowledge is inferior to the theological knowledge, and infinitely inferior to the divine knowledge of God.

Why a philosophy of Divine Love?

A. Historical survey:

In the present state of philosophy, a historical process is responsible for the general gap that has occurred between human thought and real being.

Man has faculties of knowledge, which are purely potential and empty, and are naturally ordered to be actualised and filled by knowledge of things. The act of being of material things is the principle of their knowledge in human senses: it gives to their forms (colour, sound, shapes) to impress human senses, and through them, to print their image in an inner sense, imagination. Under the pressure of its natural desire of understanding, intelligence, as an active spiritual light, illuminates this sensitive individual image, draws its intelligible contents from its material limits, to impress these contents on itself as a passive spiritual empty screen. So an intellectual universal image of the thing, abstracted from its sensitive image, actualises the potentiality of intelligence. Then, actualised intelligence forms from this information a proportioned intellectual object for its sight, which is the concept or idea of the thing, and expresses it at a lower level of imagination, voice and senses, in a universal word signifying the real thing itself. Thus from the beginning to the end of this process, the contents of human knowledge comes from the real thing actualising the sensitive potentiality, and through abstraction the intellectual potentiality.

Human activity in knowledge consists only in reception of information. Even the illuminating activity of intelligence in abstraction is subordinate to intellectual information of passive intelligence. Then, the treatment of this information by intelligence which it actualises is an assimilation to the simplicity of intelligence of the complex content of this information. This assimilation is a spontaneous analysis (analogous to the same process in assimilation of food by the body) of all the elements composing the content, and finally, a synthesis of them in a concept reproducing their unity.

This is the notion of objective knowledge, where all information comes from real things and returns to it. The knowing subject is only receptive in this order of information. Before this information comes from outside, the subject is completely empty and knows nothing. Its subjectivity has its part in knowledge on the side of reception only: which is the reason why different persons may have a different knowledge of the same thing, through information coming from the thing and is the same for all.

This action of the thing upon human knowledge relies on the act of being exercised by the thing. Everything which is, is, through its act of being, intelligible in objective knowledge: the act of being is the universal source of knowledge at the sensitive level, and at the level of intellectual knowledge, and is the imaginative reality of the thing, as well as after abstraction, the intellectual reality of the intellectual image of the thing, because being is the perfection of knowledge as well as the perfection of things. Human intelligence is ordered to the knowledge of being, beyond the knowledge of the nature of any subject of the act of being which limits it to its own contents.

The process of objective knowledge of being and of any reality was perfectly known in the thirteenth century. However, as it was predictable, when the notion of the act of being was lost in the beginning of the fourteenth century, the notion of objective knowledge of reality began to decay. Nominalist philosophies, noticing that realities are the property of individual things only, and that all concepts contained in intellectual knowledge are universal, concluded that they do not mean anything real: they are only words (nomina). Only the subject exists, and we attribute to it various names according to our partial perceptions of our senses but these names do not correspond to different perfections of the subject, and what they mean is not distinct from the subject itself.

This exclusive consideration of the subject in knowledge, and the rejection of all universal ideas as representative of reality, led to a subjective notion of the knowing subject which produces its ideas from itself only. The result is subjective philosophy, which is completely cut off from real being. Descartes in the seventeenth century, and Kant in the eighteenth century are responsible for this complete inversion of human knowledge. They replace truth by certainty. They keep a sensitive contact with material reality, but this sensitive knowledge is not certain: reason can throw a doubt on it. Reason projects its subjectivity by a priori categories, extension and duration on things. Being is only an idea: hence, the name of idealism given to this system. Concerning things, we know their appearance only, not what they are: idealism is agnostic. There is no other knowledge than self-consciousness. The subject is a prisoner of its subjectivity, running around like a fly in a bottle.

To escape this limit Hegel built a new system where everything springs from the spirit through a dialectic. The spirit expresses itself in thesis: immediately it denies the thesis in antithesis, and the result of their opposition is antithesis, something new: so the whole universe is the conclusion of a dialectic deduction which remains absolutely subjective. Marx applied this dialectic to matter, and to society: from dialectic materialism, the struggle between social classes between workers and owners started, and succeeded in Lenin's communist revolution. The system of another subjectivist, Nietzsche exalting the strength of the human will, was applied to the German people and provoked the Second World War. Both systems, accumulating terrible destruction and ruin with immense slaughter everywhere, destroyed themselves, but few philosophers understood that this destruction was the result of subjectivism which continues to remain as the master of human intelligence's, all over the world separating them from reality, from objective truth, and from God: subjectivism leads to atheism.

During the nineteenth century, a Danish Parson, Kierkegaard demonstrated against Hegle that many things couldn't be dialectically deduced. He rediscovered real being as a cause of irrational responses, like fear, pessimism etc. But, remaining submitted to kantian agnosticism, he thought that real being was inconceivable. Only faith is able to give us knowledge of the Divine Being, beyond every human comprehension. His system is existentialism, the unique reaction against absolute idealism, up to now.

Modern existentialists have not Kierkegaard's lutheran faith, and most of them are atheists. Sartre considered being as absurd, and his pessimism is

absolute: hell is the others. For Heidegger, being is unknowable. What we know is 'dasein' (we are there), which has no meaning. Nihilism is the present result of the existentialist system.

In our times, only thomists preserve objective knowledge of the real world. But most of them are more aristotelean than thomists, because only a minority within this minority recovered the true notion of the act of being professed by St. Thomas Aquinas: they are essentialists, and consider being only at the inferior level of essences, which are only potential to the act of being.

All attempts of conciliating thomism and subjectivism failed, even that of St. Edith Stein's. However in our times, Karol Wojtyła, future Pope John Paul II, professor of ethics at the Catholic Polish University of Lublin, built a new anthropology, where to external knowledge of the world and of oneself coming from sensitive and intellectual experience, is joined an inner experience of the person through subjective consciousness of its action. Both experiences are complimentary and give a synthetic knowledge of the person. This knowledge is objective, because it relies upon an objective experience of subjectivity which is a reality; the principle of this reality is the reflection in the subject of the objective experience of his own action, so he can say: "I am acting".

The whole process relies upon the act of being of the acting person. Unfortunately this anthropology is rejected by subjectivists: for them consciousness is an absolute, and excludes an inner intellectual objective experience of one self as a subject of activity. It is also not understood by thomists, who also do not accept inner experience of one self, of subjectivity, as objective because they admit only external objective experience of being. For them, subjectivity is not a reality. It is confused with subjectivism. Few persons know the Pope's anthropology, which is the human basis of most of his teachings, even though his anthropology is the key of the most important documents of Vatican II, "Dignitatem humanae" and "Gaudium et Spes", to which he contributed much.

Here we are today, and the solution of the philosophical problem as a whole is contained within the Philosophy of Divine Love: it includes the objective philosophy of act of being, united with the subjective philosophy of the person who acts through love.

B. The objective way:

St. Thomas Aquinas demonstrated God's existence, as a necessary cause of movement: everything which passes from immobility to a movement, and even from potentiality to existence, must be set in movement by an exterior mover which already exists and already is active. If this mover has not in itself the principle of its activity, it is potential to another superior mover, and so on. At the end, there is an ultimate mover, which is not moved by a superior mover, because it has in itself the source of its activity and of all successive subordinated movers.

That is a matter of common human sensitive experience. We may call that the principle of suspense: when we see a movement, there is immediately within

us an enquiry about the cause of the movement. Because our intelligence is made to perceive reality; in a reality in movement which does not show the cause of its movement, there is a supplement of perfection which trespasses the limits of its nature; there is a gap of reality between the thing and its movement; and our intelligence spontaneously looks for the reality which fills this gap from outside. When you see the handle of a door in movement, spontaneously one looks for the person who sets it in movement. All detective novels are based on this principle of suspense: where there is a murder, there is also a murderer. Where there is an action, there is an agent. Where there is something which has an act of being, and which is not by itself being, but only a subject of being, there is somebody who gave it its being, and who is his own act of being; and we call Him God.

Thus St. Thomas showed that God is the Prime Mover. However, is everything and known in the expression; God is the Prime Mover? Maybe our enquiry will not stop there, and a question will remain: Why does God give being and movement to things?

We must return to our common experience of subordinated causes. When we move something, it is to give it a perfection coming from us; but what is in ourselves the origin of this action of movement? There is a natural impulse to the thing, either to attract the thing to us, or to attract us to the thing. We call the first attraction a desire, and the second one, a love. The desire is caused by a lack of perfection in the agent, love is caused by an excess of perfection, which leads the agent to communicate his own perfection.

God is the First Cause of every perfection: so there is no place for desire in Him, who has no imperfection. There is in Him only one cause of giving movement, and being, and every perfection: Love. God is the Prime Mover because He is the Prime Lover.

Another question will arise: how does God love things, which do not exist, and are nothing before they are created?

Once more we return to our experience: we desire and we love a thing only if we previously have a knowledge of this thing, and especially the knowledge of the proper good of this thing. God the Creator, before He created things, eternally conceived things as future subjects of a participation in His Perfection, which presupposes that He has a knowledge of His Perfection, of His goodness to be participated in. The knowledge of Goodness, we call Wisdom.

God, knowing through His Wisdom, the perfection of His Being, is so delighted by this sight, that He freely decides to share it with creatures, which He conceives and loves eternally, and creates in time. The connection between Divine Wisdom which conceives things and Divine Love which communicates to things a sharing in the Divine Being, we call the Logic of Divine Love; this Logic is absolutely mysterious: its principles and its process are beyond our comprehension: we have only a limited understanding of this Logic from its effects, because God's freedom transcends everything. However, if we completely submit our judgement to the free divine decisions of God's Wisdom, we are led into the mysteries by a participation in its movement, which is

created wisdom, and our mind is spontaneously inclined to think and judge according to the divine process of this Logic. So we are introduced to the ultimate principle of Divine Love's actions which is Mercy.

Mercy is this excess of Divine Love, which not only communicates His Being to creatures, but goes beyond in taking upon Himself their misery, which they draw from their origin: nothing. (Summa I. Q.21 Art.4) Mercy is the mystery of mysteries because there is an absolute opposition between being and non-being, between God who is His Act of Being and the nothing of creatures. Mercy overcomes this opposition, by an excess of Love. Divine Mercy is the source of bringing all creation into being out of nothing. The source of the re-creation of mankind, of sinners, into Divine Being assuming their misery upon Himself through Incarnation and Redemption, again is Divine Mercy.

Mercy implies a relationship with misery, which is external to God. If we look at Mercy in its absolute principle, we discover Divine Innocence which means the transcendence, the originality of the Divine Being, its excess of Perfection and Goodness, expressed through a negative word, the negation of every evil, every deprivation of perfection, because negation is universal and absolute.

Having reached the summit of our human research into Divine Love as the first Cause of every movement, of everything, it is possible to consider now its causality from this summit through deduction: every effect will be an effect of Divine Love.

It is especially relevant today to apply this principle in the unique case of creation: the creation of a spiritual soul in the conception of every human person. God's Love, as the Cause of a human being, with the co-operation of the parents, does not make something imperfect, lacking what is the proper perfection of human nature, i.e. to be spiritual. As the spiritual soul is at the same time the form of the body, it communicates to the body all the necessary dispositions to be the proportionate subject of a spiritual soul. These dispositions are the beginning of the organs of the body which are the instruments of the spiritual activities, intelligence and will. These activities define properly a human person as such, and the spiritual soul is the principle of these activities. It is present in the person long before these activities are physically possible, where they remain implicitly contained as potentialities, because the body is not completely informed by the spiritual soul; this spiritual soul is the source of a continued development of the organs from the state of the embryo to the state of reason, when at this point they become appropriate instruments of abstraction, universal thought and will. Only a spiritual soul is able to lead this development of the body, of which it is also the end.

Modern science has shown that from the first moment of conception, from the union of both male and female elements, the program of development of the organs, and the beginnings of these organs are present. Thus, at the same moment the perfection of the creating Cause, Divine Love, and the complete dispositions of the subject, shows that the spiritual soul is present as a formal cause of the body from the first moment of conception. The purpose of the efficient Cause, Divine Love, is the communication of its image, as spiritual, at the same level as this image is in the procreating cause of the person, i.e. its parents; and finally to establish between itself and the created person a

relationship of natural love, as well as a relationship of fatherhood and motherhood between the parents and the child.

The doubt of Aristotle in this matter comes from his theory of the form springing from the potentiality of the matter. In this way, it is not possible to reach in generation a form, which transcends the potentiality of the matter, i.e. a spiritual soul, with immaterial potentiality of intellectual and voluntary operations. St. Thomas Aquinas follows him, but the philosophical demonstration of a First Cause, a Prime Mover who is a Prime Lover dissipates the aristotelean doubt: the Prime Mover can produce a spiritual soul at the moment of conception, and the Prime Lover will produce it as the proper effect of His Love: the communication of His likeness.

This is the lower expression of Divine Love, but there is a higher expression of Divine Innocence, which is revealed in Holy Scripture, and achieved by Christ's Love, His Divine Love and human love; the first one is human being, image of Divine Being. The second one is a participation in divine knowledge and divine Love, whose object is Divine Being Himself, Divine Innocence, the origin and the end, Alpha and Omega.

Because human love is the image of Divine Love, from the different forms of human love, we can reach some idea of their Model: they are complimentary in their particular perfections. Gathered together these perfections express their perfect unique source, divine Love in its simplicity: sponsal love, fatherly love, motherly love, brotherly and sisterly love. Furthermore, The Old and New Testaments reveal the genuine nature of Divine Love, and often use a comparison with these forms of human love. An analogy is necessary to deny the imperfections of human love, and to elevate their perfection to its highest degree. (Wis 13:5)

These forms have in common the communication of the proper good to another person; at the highest level is the communication of life. More deeply, at the level of the person as a principle of love, it is a gift of one's self to another, who is loved as oneself; and the perfection of this love is sacrifice: to give up one's own life for the sake of the beloved. (Jn 15:13)

God loves us as Himself in the communication, through grace, of His divine Life. God's Love transcends itself in sending us His Son to give up His own life for the salvation of all sinners: this is Mercy.

The deepest Mercy of Christ is the association to His own martyrdom, of the children killed before birth as martyrs. Being almost nothing, and being violently deprived of their only good, their life, as martyrs in Christ, they witness ultimately, to Divine Mercy in its absolute perfection, which is the transcendence of the Divine Being, Divine Innocence.

C. The subjective way:

The new subjective anthropology, elaborated by Pope John Paul II, provides a complimentary way, to reach the notion of divine Love on a philosophical ground. It is founded on the inner experience of the acting person. This fundamental act is will and will is love. The person has an immediate

intellectual experience of its act of will: which is the source of its responsibility in action. It has not an experience of the will itself and a fortiori, not an immediate experience of the soul, and of itself as the subject of the soul. The will, the soul, the person, are known through an induction into the immediate experience of the act of the will. This induction is spontaneous, and leads to its final expression: "I will" which joins the act of will to its principle, the person, as subjectively self-conscious: "I".

Every act of will has an object, which attracts it objectively. Our will has a spontaneous and necessary order to the good of our person: this good is as real as our person: in fact, we conceive it as our perfection as a person, and we necessarily will it in every personal action. The act of will is the result of both the natural order to the truth of good, which is subjective, and subjectively perceived, and of the objective attraction of some particular real good. We are free because the natural order to the truth of good is, as universal, much wider than any particular objective good. This particular good is perceived in an objective experience of knowledge, including an objective experience of ourselves as principle of our action: we express this objective experience through the word: "Me".

This objective experience of a real good as such, i.e. as desirable, and of ourselves as a limited good makes the person free to choose the particular objective good and to move itself to this good. The objective experience of the particular good and of itself is spontaneously reflected and integrated into the subjective consciousness of the person. The consequence is that free love is always the result of the objective knowledge of a real good, which is not contained in itself, and which is desired as a complement of the incomplete good of the person. The consciousness of our inability to obtain by ourselves this good, and of the necessity of desiring our perfect good leads our desire to become a prayer to somebody who will give us our good from his own good, who must be the principle of our perfect good, and who loves us: we call Him Divine Love, or the Prime Lover.

Thus the subjective anthropology is complementary to objective philosophy to climb up from desire to God's Love through prayer, which is the doorway to the gratuitous gift of beatitude. Prayer is the expression of our consciousness of dependence upon God's Love. Prayer is the key of every progress into the philosophy of Divine Love.

Can we say that Divine Love bridges the gap between faith and reason, and that the Philosophy of Divine Love shows us how?

Yes, when we reach, through a philosophical induction the knowledge of God's Being, not only as the Prime Mover, but also as the Prime Lover, we hold the highest step which is within reach of human reason; and also, which can be used to receive the Revelation of the same Divine Lover gratuitously communicating His own Life to the spiritual creature. In this sense, Divine Love is the link between faith and reason.

The Philosophy of Divine Love shows that to pass from the level of reason to the level of faith is not against reason, since according to reason, infinite Divine Love is able to elevate the spiritual creature to its own level, through faith. The theology of Divine Love shows that this gratuitous elevation, which is known through faith only, is convenient to His Glory, because as such God is known and loved as He is. It is also convenient to the spiritual creature which, being an image of God, has the capacity of receiving through grace a sharing in divine knowledge and Divine Love; and also because, being open to the universal its beatitude is beyond any limited spiritual good. So its natural desire of beatitude is conveniently fulfilled by a supernatural hope of the divine Good, which is out of its reach.

The highest convenience* is provided by Divine Love's infinity, which is to communicate itself as much as it is possible, i.e. infinitely.

* We cannot completely understand God but some proportion of God which we call convenience.

Discovering the act of being (Summa Th. 1a Q 50 a2)

All things which our senses perceive around us are beings. The first knowledge which we have of them is that they are. Only after this knowledge, we perceive what they are. This can be experienced when we see from far away something coming towards us. First, we see that it is a being. When it comes nearer, we see that it is a man; and finally we recognise this person. What makes him this person is his individuality as a subject, what makes him a man is his human nature, common to all other men. What makes him a being?

Speaking of himself as a being, he will say: "I am", like he would say "I run". The likeness of expression in both cases, a verb, leads to a comparison. Like a runner runs in exercising his activity of running through his legs, a being is, in exercising his activity of being through his nature. This activity of being, which is the principle of every other activity, is called actuality. It consists in an act of being, which makes actual every subject of a nature. A thing, which exercises its act of being, is also called real, and reality is the abstract name of the act of being. The act of being transcends the nature of a real thing; the nature is potential towards the act of being, which is exercised by the subject through it, like through an instrument.

The perfection of a thing, which constitutes this thing, is called its form. This form is the more perfect part of the nature. It brings the act of being to the subject; it receives the act of being, which is not comprised in it, and is its actuality, transcending it and perfecting it. A common error consists in assimilating the act of being to a superior form, which would be received by the subject. The act of being is not a form, but the actuality of the form; it is received by the subject through the form, and it is an act, which is exercised by the subject through the form. We call a being something, which exercises the act of being through an instrument, which is its nature. The difference between actuality and activity is that the actuality is received by the subject, whereas the activity is produced by the subject: both of them are exercised by the subject.

A thing is an object of knowledge and desire inasmuch as it exercises its act of being. Thus a being is, as such, true and good.

Inner credibility of private revelations.

Christ proved His divine Revelation by miracles and fulfilment of prophecies: this is an external, objective, and perfect proof of credibility. Private revelations can be proved by miracles, by visible extraordinary divine gifts of those who transmit these revelations.

However there are inner criteria of credibility within private revelations:

1. Not only are their contents in complete accordance with public Revelation, and with the teaching of the Church. Not only can what they show as new truth be found, as implicitly revealed, in public Revelation, but this new truth is manifested in a special splendour (Veritatis Splendor), in a light which cannot be attributed to human invention. This splendour consists in a glorification of the divine attributes, of the work of Christ, of the Church. That is the reason why private revelations are often granted to children, to simple or ignorant persons, not to scholars and masters, just as the Revelation of the true God as "I Am" was given to a poor and small people of nomads, and not to the powerful peoples of ancient times who had reached a very high level of civilisation and of human thought.
2. When private revelations give missions to achieve, their divine origin is proved by the heavenly, not earthly, means, which these missions require for their fulfilment. These means are: reliance upon grace and prayer, and a participation in Christ's Cross, which are alone in proportion with the end to be reached, which is beyond all human power and action. That is the reason why these missions are often given to persons who are deprived of any possibility of a human fulfilment.

Appendix II.THEOLOGICAL PRESENTATION CARRIED
OUT BY FATHER FRANCIS FROST OF THE DOCTRINE
CONTAINED IN THE MESSAGE OF DIVINE
INNOCENCE, 1993.

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Introduction - Preliminary remarks.

Central to the messages given to Patricia de Menezes is the spirituality of Divine Innocence which might be summarised as follows: By our sins and the sins of others Divine Innocence has been crucified in ourselves and others. We are to recover the Divine Innocence of our baptism and progress in holiness by union with the Passion of Jesus and the Compassion of Mary (this expression is not used in the messages but its content is everywhere present), using all the means offered to us by the Church: her teaching, based on the gospel, prayer, (penance with the Sacrament of Reconciliation), and above all the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

All of this is classical doctrinal and spiritual teaching. One notes, however, in the messages that it is given an intensity, an immediacy and a simplicity which make it accessible even to the least educated. In this respect, it shows a certain kinship with the "Little Way" of Theresa of Lisieux. A couple of examples will suffice:

Jesus. "Give Me every time you have condemned others and others have condemned you unjustly - and stand here with Me, silent and uncomplaining, I will give you all the times you have borne, quietly and patiently, condemnation and injustice. I will give you strength and help where you still bear injustice and condemnation silently, now and in the future." (The Way of Reparation, page.13, First Station of the Cross).

Jesus. "Give Me your innocence crucified - all the wounds and hurts of the past and present. Give Me your loneliness and your pain. Give Me your lost purity. Give Me your broken hopes and shattered dreams. Give Me your crosses and I will gladly take the burden of them Myself.... I will give you back your innocence and heal the wounds of your past and present - place in your heart love, light, beauty and innocence reborn - resurrected in My Resurrection." (ibid, Second Station of the Cross).

Furthermore, the messages ask for the founding of a spiritual Family in the Church under the patronage of the Holy Family. The members of this family, which is to include priests, consecrated persons of both sexes and married or single people, are to be so close to the Holy family that they are to consider themselves, as it were, as "blood members" of, that family, through the Blood of Jesus, shed for them on the Cross. In this privileged association with one another, they can, through the living out of motherhood and fatherhood, in the Church and society, as Jesus and His Mother wish it to be lived, overcome, both for others and for themselves, all that degrading of family life which makes growth in Divine Innocence impossible.

These recommendations converge with many new forms of spiritual renewal which have sprung up in the life of the Church and which, according to the opinion of no less a person than the President of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Ratzinger, truly embody the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, as a force for Church renewal. At the same time, they have behind them a long line of founders of religious congregations and spiritual writers, who have underlined the importance, for the spiritual life, of the infancy through which Jesus passed and of the Holy Family as a whole, and whose teaching culminates, at the end of the 19th century, in the two greatest spiritual figures of that period: Therese of Lisieux and Charles de Foucauld.

Amongst the victims, in whom Divine Innocence is crucified over and over again, a special place is given, in the messages, to aborted children. The messages ask that the

Magisterium of the Catholic Church recognise these little ones as martyrs in the true sense and that the Church lay claim to the spiritual riches of their martyrdom for the benefit of all the faithful, and even of those outside her visible boundaries. Special consideration must be given to those, parents and others, guilty of the sin of abortion. A special relationship is to be established between the parents, in particular, and the aborted children, such as will bring about the triumph of Divine Innocence in their lives. "Father of all consolation, from whom nothing is hidden, you know the sorrow and faith of any repentant parents here who mourn the death of their children. May they find comfort in knowing that these children are entrusted to Your loving care. Give to these parents, and all who have condoned abortion, the grace to amend their lives in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church." (Way of Reparation, page. 37).

However the Church cannot take such steps, under the guidance of the Magisterium, without prior theological investigation. Jesus explicitly asks for such investigation in many of the messages. He does this in particular *a propos* of interpreting rightly certain key passages of Scripture. For instance, of two passages of Deuteronomy, Chapter 21, Patricia says; "These two passages were pointed out to me (1 to 9 and 15 to 17), and I was asked to bring them to the attention of the Church. Our Lord said He had come to fulfil the Law, every dot and stroke." (31st March 1995). The reason for Jesus acting in this way is clear: the problem, posed by claiming that the aborted children are martyrs, in the full sense which the Church has given to that word, is the relationship between their eternal destiny and the sacrament of Baptism, which the Church has always taught to be of necessity for salvation. This does not necessarily mean the exclusion of unbaptised children from salvation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it this way " ... the great mercy of God who wills that all men might be saved (1 Timothy 2,4) and the tenderness of Jesus towards children which leads Him to say: "Let the children come to Me, do not prevent them ..." (Mark 10,14), allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism." (No. 1261). But the positive claim that aborted children are true martyrs requires a theological clarification which this leaving of unbaptised children to the mercy of God simply does not contain.

With this issue, explicitly raised by Jesus in the messages, most of this presentation will be concerned. It will be necessary to scrutinise, with this issue in mind, the key doctrines of Redemption by Christ, Mary's role in our Redemption, and the sacramental power of the Church. Such investigation will uncover the doctrinal foundations of Divine Innocence spirituality as a whole, without there being any need to analyse all the aspects of this wider context. There is need, however, to come back to the project to found a spiritual family, modelled on the example of the Holy Family and contained within it. Integral to this spiritual thrust are concepts of motherhood and fatherhood, which need to be seen in their relationship to the central truths about our Redemption.

What follows, therefore, will deal successively with the following points:

- I. The Precious Blood of Jesus.
- II. The Hidden and Mystical Wounds of Mary.....
- III. The Baptism of aborted children in the Blood of Jesus
- IV. The Personhood of aborted children.....
- V. The Role of the Angels.....
- VI. Aborted Children and Original Sin.....
- VII. The Share of the Church on Earth in the
Salvation of aborted children.....
- VIII. The Responsibility of the Church.....
- IX. The Novitiate of the Holy Family.....
- X. Appendix A.....
- XI. Appendix B.....

I. The Precious Blood of Jesus.

The cause of our Redemption is the bloody Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, in which the realism of the sacrificial offering of Himself to His Father is such that there is a real separation of His Blood from His Body.

It is in this sense that we are saved by the Blood of Jesus, prior to our being washed by water in Baptism. We are washed in the Blood of Jesus; "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Apoc.7,14). Hence Jesus refers to His future violent separation of His Blood from His Body on the Cross as His Baptism; "But I have a baptism to be baptised with and how I am straitened until it be accomplished." (Lk. 12.50).

In other words washing in water is inseparable from being washed in the very Blood of Jesus. This is why water flows from the side of Jesus on the Cross, but only after the flow of blood: "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." (Jn. 19,34). The water is the spiritual fruitfulness of the blood and thus it is linked to the coming, from the very heart of Jesus pierced on the Cross, of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' But this spoke He of the Spirit which they that believe in him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified!" (Jn.7,37-39).

This glorification is the lifting up of Jesus on the Cross. It is then that the Holy Spirit flows out of His Body, in the pouring out of the Blood from that Body. It is then that the Spirit of love is poured out on us giving the spiritual fruitfulness to us of the sacrificial separation of His Body and Blood, sacramentally given to us every day in the separate consecration of the bread and wine at Mass. The first letter of St. John sums it up this way: "This is He (Jesus) that came by

water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only but by water and blood, and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three witnesses that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water and the blood; and these three agree in one." (1 Jn.5,6-8). Yet, in this same Holy Spirit, it is the blood which is first and foremost fruitful for our purification, the water being the showing forth of that purification in washing: "How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. "(Hebrews 9,14).

Many aspects of the messages illustrate, either visually or in words these fundamental Scriptural truths. Patricia often sees the aborted children, both in the care of Mary and the Angels and intimately associated with the Sacrifice of the Mass. Jesus affirms over and over again that His bloody Sacrifice is enough for the salvation of these children: "Is My Blood not sufficient to save them. My poor innocent slain lambs?" (Message dated 26th September 1989). "I have Blessed them, you cannot change it! I command you to bless those I have Blessed" (Message dated 19th October 1988). Jesus also refers Patricia to Deuteronomy, Chapter 21, 1-9, in which the procedure for purification from unidentified murder is described.* He means the unidentified victim to be a figure of aborted children. The heifer, offered in sacrifice, then becomes a figure of Himself, and the river, in which the elders must wash their hands over the slaughtered heifer, symbolises the river of blood and water which flows from the side of Jesus on the Cross. In the course of the explanation Patricia sees: "Our Lord hanging on the Cross, a fountain of blood and water flowing from His side." (Ibid). One could also see the obligation of the elders to wash their hands as pointing to the need for purification in priests who have such intimate contact with the Body and Blood of Jesus. Hence the lavabo rite which the Church has placed at the end of the Offertory of the Mass.

* It is for this reason that He shows her rivers pouring out of His side during Mass.

II. The Hidden and Mystical Wounds of Mary.

The Tradition of the Church has always seen the moment at which Jesus speaks to His Mother standing at the foot of the Cross, as the moment when He includes in Her Divine Motherhood, all His brethren, the whole human race. It is, by that very fact, the moment of fulfilment of Simeon's prophecy to Mary: "Yea a sword shall pierce thy own soul ... " (Luke 2, 35). Jesus, in substituting, as it were, in the person of St. John, all our persons, for His own Divine Person, was asking of Mary a total act of self-sacrifice, in her sacrificial surrender of His Own Person to the point of separation from Her in death for our salvation. John Paul II calls this act of Mary's the most profound *kenosis* (self-emptying) of faith in the history of the whole world. (Both in *Redemptoris Mater* and *Mulierem Dignitatis*)

There is, then, a mystical piercing of the whole being of Mary which results from, and is a share-in, the violent separation of the Body and Blood of Jesus for our sins. In the case of Jesus Himself, His physical Heart was pierced with a sword, but not His soul,

because St. John especially testifies that, at this point. His soul had left His Body. Mary really receives wounds, albeit hidden and mystical, as a share in, and intimate union with, the wounds, both physically visible and deeply mystical, of Jesus. Patricia tells us: "... while saying the Rosary, at the Mystery of the Crucifixion, I saw Our Lord in agony on the Cross. Our Lady stood beneath the Cross in terrible anguish. She appealed to the Father in these words: 'Give me His pain: Give me His pain:' It was then that Our Lady received the Hidden and Mystical Wounds and shared, in a deep mystical and physical way, in Our Lord's Crucifixion. Our Lord and Our Lady seemed completely in union with each other in carrying out the Father's Will." (Message dated 15th August 1987).

Jesus wishes us to give honour to the Hidden and Mystical Wounds of Mary in order to deepen our spiritual understanding of the intimate part played by His Mother in our Redemption: "Honour these Hidden Wounds, hidden in humility. What has she not suffered for you and for My sake? Come, come deeper into My Heart and My Wounds through the intercession of the Immaculate Heart of your Mother and her Wounds." (Message dated 8th May 1985). "I wish these Hidden Wounds of My Mother to bring to the notice of men the intimate part their Heavenly Mother has played in their salvation." (ibid).

This honour is to take public form in the Church. There is to be a statue of Mary of the Hidden and Mystical Wounds. Addressing herself to the Pope, Mary says: "Most Holy Father, I come to you in this Statue with a desire dear to the Heart of Jesus I wish through the Statue of the Mother of the Hidden and Mystical Wounds, to gather in my poor little ones." (Message dated 1st February 1989.) There is to be a feast of 'The Hidden and Mystical Wounds' of Mary. The day, on which Mary has, on occasion, shown to Patricia something of the depth of meaning in this way of honouring her, is the Feast of the Assumption. Thus, as the Statue of her Mystical Wounds is brought into a Church in Galway, on the Feast of the Assumption, 1987, Mary says; "If only this Image were in every Church, so that through it I could gather my poor wounded children into the saving Wounds of the Glorious Son of God: I share with you all your hidden wounds and sufferings just as intimately as I shared at the time of my Divine Son's Passion all His Wounds and Sufferings." And a little later on: "I come to you today to this Church on the Feast of my Assumption into Heaven, to draw you out of my Son's Crucifixion in your souls and lives, to His Glorious Resurrection." Consequently the day chosen for the feast of the Hidden and Mystical Wounds of Mary is August 17th" and this date was made known on the Feast of the Assumption 1989 (see message on that date).

Important doctrinal considerations underlie this intimate association between the wounded Heart of Mary and her glorious Assumption. In the liturgical readings for this feast, no emphasis is put on the death of Mary. As Orthodox Christians rightly assert, the death of Mary was a Dormition, that is a passage in love from this world of time to eternal glory in union with Jesus, and with a glorified body like His. Does this mean that, in spite of her close association with the Mystery of the Redemption, Mary, unlike Jesus, escaped violent death? The desire of Jesus to have public honour given to the hidden wounds of Mary points in exactly the opposite direction. It is proper to the eminent dignity of womanhood, that a woman dies more profoundly in the death of the fruit of her being, than in her own physical death. Mary died then a violent death when Jesus, Her Son, died violently. It was a supernatural death in which she went through the perfect last agony of her motherhood and received Hidden Stigmata. Patricia's comment on what was revealed to her on the Feast of the Assumption in the Church in

Galway is: "This mystical sharing was the only way Our Lady could bear to watch the Passion and Death of Our Lord, and although this caused her unimaginable spiritual and physical suffering, she pleaded with God the Father to give her this grace." (Message dated 15th August 1987). In other words, through God's grace and in conformity with His Will, she bore to the uttermost limits the crucifixion of her motherhood, in both its spiritual and physical implications.

Because her motherhood united her so closely to Her Son in His visible human form on earth she cannot but be closely united to Him also in His Eucharistic Presence. On the feast of St. Margaret Mary, 16th October 1992, Patricia, in a vision, saw this closeness of Mary to the Eucharistic Presence of Jesus as a beating of Her Heart in perfect rhythm with the Heart of Jesus. At the same time, she desires ardently that all of us should, through adoration and love of Jesus' Eucharistic Presence, come to the same synchronisation of our heart-beat with His. As a means to this end, in the context of the same vision, Jesus asks for the institution of a feast of the Eucharistic Hearts of Jesus and Mary: "Ask the Church to proclaim a feast of the Eucharistic Hearts!" (In block capitals on the same sheet. Feast of St. Margaret Mary, 1992). The date suggested is some time in September; perhaps, because, in the middle of this month, there are two feasts which underline the synchronisation of the sufferings of Jesus and Mary: the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on the 14th and the Seven Dolours of Mary on the following day.

It is true that the adjective "Eucharistic" cannot be used in a univocal sense of both Jesus and Mary. The Heart of Jesus is really and truly present in the Eucharist: Mary's is not. The explanation of Jesus on this subject is as follows: "Does a body have within it two hearts? Those who fear the term: "Eucharistic Hearts of Jesus and Mary" do not use logic. How can My Mother's Heart beat in My Breast and Mine in Hers? My Mother's Heart beats in union and in unison with My Heart and Its Desires. My Mother's Eucharistic Heart endeavours to draw all souls to love My Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament. We are One in love and desire for men to come to the source of their salvation, I AM" (April 22nd, 1985).

The logic of Jesus, then, is this: just as underlining Mary's close association with Her Son's existence on earth does not lead to any confusion of roles, so the use of the adjective "Eucharistic", to underline Her close association with the sacramental existence of Jesus in the Eucharist, will not lead to confusion either. The conclusion: I AM: is also a salutary reminder that we have to reach beyond the limits of our limited human language to enter, by love and prayer, into the mysteries of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Nevertheless, whenever new doctrinal developments are at stake in the content of the messages, Jesus insists on the need for pronouncement by the Magisterium. In the last resort, therefore, it is for the Magisterium to pronounce whether this analogical, rather than univocal, use of the adjective, Eucharistic, as applied to Mary, is not only possible but pastorally helpful. *

One might further ask: Why give such emphasis to the role of Mary in our Redemption: This question brings us back to the central issue requiring theological elucidation according to the express wish of Jesus: the relationship between the eternal destiny of aborted children and the infinite merits of the Redemptive acts of Christ. In the next section this relationship will be looked at directly. But this analysis will not be enough. We need to understand how the eternal destiny of, aborted children relates to the Church. This understanding cannot be reached without taking into account the role of Mary. In this light, one of the messages about Her Hidden and Mystical

Wounds takes on particular significance: "I wish the world to realise the debt they owe to My Most Tender Mother - the suffering she bore for mankind in perfect union with Her God and Son. I wish these Wounds to be honoured in union with My Own Wounds to save souls, especially the most abandoned sinners and weakest souls." (Message dated 15th April 1985). It is because the Hidden and Mystical Wounds of Mary have the power to succour the weakest and most abandoned, amongst whom must be reckoned aborted children, that all that has been said in this second section is direct preparation for what will be said in the seventh section about the share of the Church in their salvation. What is at stake is the Divine Motherhood of Mary, without which her unique relationship to the Church is impossible to understand. Mary pleads through the Passion and Death of Jesus and through her wounded motherhood.

*May Mary forgive me if there is any discourtesy towards Her in this!

(Referring to this prayer, in February 1993 Our Lady said to Patricia: Our Lady: "It would be more discourteous not to seek the truth! The truth sets you free from any misinterpretation!")

III. The Baptism of Aborted Children in the Blood of Jesus.

Because the flowing blood of Jesus is the ultimate source of the fruitfulness which comes from baptism, aborted children are baptised directly by the Blood of Jesus. They are literally washed in it, "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, 'Who are these, who are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?' And I said unto him, 'Sir, thou knowest?' And he said to me, 'these are they who came out of the great tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb' ". (Apoc. 7,13-14). In the messages, Jesus clearly identifies the great tribulation as applicable to the evil of abortion, practised on a massive scale, by indicating another passage of the Apocalypse (6, 9-11), in which there is also a vision of martyrs who have preceded us, who are on earth, into glory. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them, that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, does thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?' And white robes were given unto every one of them: and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." (Message dated early 1992).

[On 24th June 1999 Our Lord referred to this Scriptural passage in answer to a Polish Bishop who said: "You are asking the Church to canonise children not yet killed but who would be in the future"]

Jesus emphasises, in particular, verse 9, that as a washing in the Blood of Jesus, the death of aborted children is true martyrdom, because it has taken place as a witness to the truth of the Word of God about the sanctity of human life. The Word of God includes the Fifth Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill" and also the Fourth: "Honour thy father and thy mother," because in committing abortion, the parents are dishonouring a parental dignity which comes from the Fatherhood of God. It is this witness to the truth which makes the shedding of the blood of the aborted children an intimate sharing in the shedding of the very Blood of Jesus and in its Redemptive

power. Thus in the messages Jesus says "When will My Church on earth realise that they died in the Blood of My Crucifixion? Their bloody martyrdom to the forces of evil at the hands of their own parents and society – is this not enough to give them the grace of baptism by their innocent blood? Is My Blood not sufficient to save them, My poor innocent slain lambs?" (26th September 1989).

The chief doctrinal source to which Jesus points in the teachings and life of His Church, in order to substantiate the truth of this claim, is the feast of the Holy Innocents. Jesus says "It is within the Church's power to proclaim this doctrine and number these little innocent ones (the aborted) among the Holy Innocent Martyrs - it is My desire that this is done:" (An undated feast of the Holy Innocents). This indication converges with the change in the status of the feast of the Holy Innocents, in the wake of the liturgical reform initiated by the Second Vatican Council, in order to offer it unambiguously to the Universal Church as a feast of martyrs. (The celebrant of the Mass must no longer wear purple vestments but red).

In keeping with this change in status and with its doctrinal implications, the liturgical texts make liberal use of those passages in the Apocalypse which associate the saved with the Blood of the Lamb. Besides the text of 7,13-14, quoted above, there are allusions to this relationship with the purifying blood of the Lamb in the Introit: "These innocent children were slain for Christ. They follow the spotless Lamb and proclaim for everetc" ; in the Alleluia verse; " ... the white robed army of martyrs praise you"; in the Communion antiphon: "they follow the Lamb wherever He goes." The most important doctrinal truth relevant to aborted children is however contained in the three Proper Prayers: the Opening Prayer, the Prayer over the gifts and the Prayer after Communion. They all make it absolutely clear that the martyrdom which unites the Holy Innocents to the Lamb was a pure gift which required no conscious act of intelligence (knowledge) or will (love) on their part.

The Prayer after Communion is the most explicit: "Lord, by a wordless profession of faith in Your Son ...", that is, by the actual act of undergoing death (Opening Prayer). The Prayer over the gifts makes an application of this grace of martyrdom, of baptism of blood, as pure gift, to the pure gift of God's grace in our own baptism: "Lord, You give us Your life even before we understand ..." (that is if we have been baptised as little children, as we should be, if we have been brought up by Catholic parents). This observation of the Opening Prayer is relevant to the doctrinal issue at stake, if only because, all our own merits being totally dependent on God, we have no leg to stand on to try and set limits to the mercy and goodness of God towards other members of the human family, whether they benefit from a Church celebration of water baptism or not. Jesus is constantly coming back to this in the messages: "Is My blood not sufficient ---?" (see above). In any case nothing more is needed than the central doctrinal truth asserted by these Prayers that martyrdom is a pure gift, to understand how aborted children can be true martyrs, without having to make any conscious acts of knowing, or even loving.

The objection might be raised that to link the doctrinal assertion about the eternal destiny of such a vast number of human beings, never born into this world, to one feast in the liturgical year is to over-estimate the doctrinal implications of this feast. But such an objection would not do justice to the true nature of the Church's Magisterium. According to the principle *lex orandi, lex credendi*, a doctrinal truth, so knitted into the prayer life of the Church, as to be proposed to all the faithful, in a feast prescribed for celebration by the Universal Church during one of the major seasons of the liturgical

year, the Octave of Christmas, cannot but be a necessary component of that totality of Catholic truth which, because it is always and everywhere being taught, belongs to the Church's Ordinary Magisterium.

Another example, not without relevance to the content of the messages (see the preceding section) might help to clarify this point. The chief justification, in the area of doctrinal proof, for the papal definition in 1950 of the dogma of the bodily Assumption of Mary into heaven was the existence of a feast of the Assumption, common to both East and West, because going back several centuries behind the separation, and, therefore, witnessing to a doctrinal continuity not only with the Fathers of the Church but with the discreet, though not inconsistent, evidence of the Scriptures (Apocalypse, Chapter 12).

Furthermore the messages relate the destiny of aborted children, not only to the feast of the Holy Innocents and the scriptural evidence on which it is based, but also to the scriptural figure of St. John the Baptist. "I (Patricia) was told to ask the Priests by what means St. John the Baptist was baptised as the answer was in some way bound up with this issue. I don't know how." (3rd December 1988). The Priests can only answer what the Church teaches us through asking us to celebrate a feast of the beheading of John the Baptist: that John the Baptist was, like aborted children, washed by martyrdom in the blood of Jesus. The moral truth for which he died was integral to that Gospel truth which, in the final analysis, is the very Person of Jesus Himself. Hence Jesus, in the messages, links the aborted children to John the Baptist, by associating them with His own words about John the Baptist in the Gospel: "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Matt 11:11 (Message given 25th July 1992 at Nazareth House.)

What Jesus means is that the aborted children, because they have not been allowed to be born into this world, seem so little and insignificant, and yet it is the very greatness of John the Baptist which throws into relief their importance, not only in relation to their own eternal destiny, but also to ours. And so Jesus adds in the same message: "These little Martyrs, martyred in the womb, have witnessed with their blood to the truth and the great Commandment: 'Thou shall not kill'." (ibid) "Their death and martyrdom, when claimed by the Church as true martyrdom, will be a mighty force against the evil of abortion" (ibid).

Implicit, if not explicit, in the choice by Jesus of the example of John the Baptist, is another striking convergence with the way the Church's Magisterium has recently spoken about martyrdom. It could be expressed this way. Although Maximilian Kolbe did not die as a result of professing belief in Christ, John Paul II, in canonising him, classified his feast among the feasts of martyrs and not of confessors. He did this because Maximilian Kolbe died a martyr to the image of Jesus defaced in His little ones, in accordance with the Gospel statement: "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it to Me" (Matt 25:40). For the same reason, John Paul II, when he visited Canterbury Cathedral, accepted to kneel, in the apse, in front of photographs of martyrs to the dignity of the human person, that is, once again, martyrs to the image of Jesus defaced in His little ones: Oscar Romeiro, Bishop Luwum of the Anglican Church in Uganda etc. Similarly, therefore, aborted children are not only, in themselves, little ones, in whom the image of Jesus is defaced, but also their martyrdom witnesses to the immense multitude of the suffering members of our human race in whom Divine Innocence is crucified. Were Archbishop Romeiro

to be canonised, such an event could not but be another pointer to the appropriateness of the Magisterium recognising such immense riches at the Church's disposal in her struggle to uphold and promote human rights and the dignity of human personhood, from conception to the grave, on which they are founded.

Jesus Himself associates the aborted children with the verse of Matthew, Chapter 25, just quoted: "How much longer will their Crucified Innocence be ignored and go unrecognised? Will the Father's Justice not fall? Will their case go unheard by the Supreme Judge? What you do to the least of these little ones you do to ME!" (Message given at Nazareth House, July 1992). There is in fact a literal likeness between aborted children and Jesus. No one could have brought Jesus into the world with a purer and greater love than Mary's. But no sooner was Jesus in the world, but He was rejected by the world. The details of this rejection, described in the account of the birth of Jesus, in the Gospel of St. Luke (2:1-7), are summed up in a general theological statement applying to the whole historical life of Jesus in the gospel of St. John: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." (John 1:11). In this sense the least in the kingdom of God who is greater than St. John the Baptist, whilst explained by Jesus as a designation of aborted children, as being in the singular and not in the plural - *mikroteres* in the Greek - is none other than the very Person of Jesus Himself in the mystery of His rejection and humiliation.

Here, it would seem, we have the true meaning or application of a passage of Deuteronomy 21:15-17, shown without explanation to Patricia, with the injunction that priests and theologians should ponder on it. The passage is as follows: "If a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, and the loved one and the unloved one both bear him children, and the first-born is of the unloved wife, when the man comes to bequeath his goods to his sons, he may not treat the son of the wife whom he loves as the first-born, at the expense of the son of the wife whom he does not love, the true first-born. As his first-born he must acknowledge the son of the wife whom he does not love, giving him a double share of his estate; this son being the first fruit of his vigour, the right of the first-born is his." (Message dated 19th October 1988) In the account of Jesus' birth, Luke designates Him as Mary's first-born (2,7). Jesus is Mary's first-born, as the uncreated Son of the Father, engendered from all eternity and, therefore, as preceding every creature in whose name Mary has said "Yes" to the mystery of the Incarnation. He is also Mary's first-born, as the first-born, by His Death and Resurrection of all those whom He saves from spiritual death (Col. 1: 18). As the forerunner of our own victory over sin and death. He gives us all to Mary to be her children, so that, by her Motherly care and powerful intercession, she can enable us to win that victory. Why, then, are aborted children not officially recognised by the Church's Magisterium as a precious part of the heritage, of Jesus' Death and Resurrection, bequeathed to Mary as her children? This is the question which Jesus is putting to the Magisterium, in parable form, by quoting these verses from Deuteronomy. It is as if, by its silence, the Magisterium were not recognising a very rich part of the heritage which belongs to the Church through her spousal relationship with Jesus and which comes to her through her being pre-contained, as it were, in the spousal relationship of Mary with the Holy Spirit, by which she gave birth to her first-born Son (Luke 2,7).

In other words, through her Magisterium, the Church must relate the rich heritage, which the company of children martyred in abortion constitutes for her, directly to the Person of Jesus, the first-born of Mary. Only so will she come into the possession of the full richness of her own spousal relationship with Him. She must give full weight

to this particular consequence of the recognition by both Paul VI and John Paul II that Mary is truly *Mater Ecclesiae*: Mother of the Church. Otherwise there would be a strange setting aside of part of the richness of Mary's motherhood of the Church and her power of intercession for the Church, which would resemble the rejection of Jesus in which she shared at His birth, both of which humiliations are pointed to by Jesus in the passage from Deuteronomy used by Him as a parable.

From a practical pastoral point of view, this parable about the first-born shows that the fathers of the aborted children have been guilty of an irresponsible exercise of their fatherhood. They are indeed, as the husband with two wives, responsible for the vigour of their youth and for their own salvation. Contrition with this recognition of responsibility is required. Speaking of the martyrdom of aborted children as a rich heritage is in no way to condone the sin of murder of which they are the victims. The messages give warnings which are almost frightening. To honour John the Baptist as a martyr is in no way to canonise Herod.

IV. The Personhood of Aborted Children.

Human life is sacred from the moment of conception, because from that moment it is in the embrace of the creative activity of God. This truth which the Church has always upheld is taught categorically by her Magisterium at the present time. By citing a key affirmation of this truth made by Cardinal Ratzinger in *Donum Vitae*, the new Catechism of the Catholic Church makes it quite clear that such teaching is to be considered as part of the content of the Ordinary Magisterium. No. 2758, citing *Donum Vitae*, states: "Human life is sacred because, from its origin, it is embraced in the creative action of God and remains for always in a special relationship with its Creator, its unique end. God alone is master of life from its beginning to its termination; no one can claim, in any circumstance whatsoever, the right for himself to directly destroy an innocent human being." No. 2270 then draws out the moral consequence of this inviolability of human life: "Human life must be given absolute respect and protection from the moment of conception. From the very first moment of its existence, the human being must be granted the rights of the person, among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life." (Translations of the author from the original French version. The original version of *Donum Vitae* is also in French.)

In the messages, Jesus multiplies the references to Scripture to illustrate this teaching of the absolute creative mastery of God over human life. He points in particular to both Old and New Testament texts: to Galatians 1,15: "But when it pleased God who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace"; to Psalm 138, 13-15: "For it was You who created my being; knit me together in my mother's womb. ... Already You knew my soul, my body held no secrets from You when I was being fashioned in secret and moulded in the depths of the earth" (January 13th 1991). This latter text is quoted by No. 2270 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

More importantly in the messages, by referring to texts in which a child is promised to a woman, before she actually conceives it, Jesus is indicating that our existence is intended in the mind of God, before our conception. Jesus refers to the promise made to Sarah, to Samson's mother, to John the Baptist's mother and to the special case of Himself in relation to His own Mother. To the objection that all these persons in Scripture are special cases He replies: "Every soul has a special destiny and that is to become a saint and to enter heaven and be with God for ever." (Message dated 3rd

December 1988). St. Paul speaks of this predestination which affects each one of us in a text aptly assigned by the Church's liturgy to the feast of the Immaculate Conception. "Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love ..." (Ephesians 1:3-4). Or again in Romans 8:29: "For those whom He did foreknow. He also did predestine to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren".

The messages also enter into the delicate area of the direct creation by God of the human spiritual soul; direct, that is, in the sense of not involving the collaborative procreative activity of the parents, as in the case of the body. To an objection voiced by a priest to Patricia to the effect that abortion would not be the heinous crime that it actually is, because in the womb the child would not yet have a soul, Our Lady replies: "Does God create a body without a soul? This is against the teachings of the Church. Animals have no souls." (Mary must mean here the spiritual immortal soul of the human being). "Those who say the child in the womb has no soul will slaughter it like an animal. They slaughter innocent children." (19th October 1988.) Again on the same undated sheet Jesus says: "Do the priests and theologians suppose I was soulless in the womb? Did John the Baptist have no soul in the womb: Did a soulless body leap for joy? Do they suppose the body of the unborn child in the womb can exist full of life without its soul..." (ibid).

Such statements inevitably raise the question: when is the soul of the unborn foetus created by God? Mary's question: "Does God create a body without a soul?", already implies that the creation of a spiritual soul is in some way linked to conception, because the biological, and, therefore, bodily, life of a human being is a continuous living process from conception to the grave. Thus other statements tend in the same direction. To Patricia's question: "Mother is there not some way to show the soul is present at conception?"; Mary replies: "The care of the soul has been shown in the scriptures even before conception." (ibid). Mary even goes so far as to say: "It is time the Church spoke on this matter. The soul is infused at conception." (ibid).

However, what Mary does not say is that it is possible to subject this infusion of the soul to scientific observation of the "*conceptus*" (the embryo which has just been conceived) or even to explain it philosophically. Furthermore what seems to be a categorical statement of infusion at conception is qualified by Mary in the following rather strange sentence: "Only God has the right to give and to take life; to breathe life into the soul and to take back His breath of life." (ibid). If God can see fit to take back the breath which makes the soul be the soul, would this not suggest that, in the *conceptus*, there is a fundamental capacity for accession to the spirit-centred activity of a spiritual soul, and that this makes of the *conceptus*, right from the outset, a person and not just a biological organism; but that God might see fit not to go on infusing His creative love to the point of bestowing on the *conceptus* the fullness of human spirit-centredness. If such were the case then the conceding of the status of personhood to the *conceptus* would not entail the conclusion that thirty per cent of all spirit-centred human persons are eliminated by natural processes from the womb in the early stages of their foetal development. [Patricia: On 2nd November 1995 I asked Our Lord about all the natural terminations of conception He referred me to the passage where St. John was thought to be alive until Christ returns (Jn 21:21). He said: "What is that to you?"]

By relating the mystery of human personhood to a mystery of Divine creative dominion and initiative which utterly transcends all scientific observation or philosophical explanation [In a message dated 16th June 2002 Jesus commented, "Except, the philosophy of Divine Love], the recent teaching of the Church's Magisterium is consonant with the general trend of the messages, even if it has not yet provided certain doctrinal clarifications for which they seem to be calling (see Mary's remark above). In *Donum Vitae*, Cardinal Ratzinger puts it this way: "It is true that no experimental evidence is able of itself to lead to the discovery of a spiritual soul; however scientific conclusions provide precious indications for reasoned discernment of the presence of a person from the first appearance of human life: how could a human individual not be a human person? The Magisterium has not committed itself expressly to affirmation of a philosophical nature but it reaffirms constantly the moral condemnation of all abortion by deliberate intervention." (Doc. Cath., no. 1937, column 3536 - Author's translation into English).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, after quoting *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 14, to the effect that man is endowed with both a body and a soul, does not speak of the infusion of a soul at conception but says: "From conception onwards, the human person is destined to eternal beatitude." (CCC no. 1703). In other words, however and whenever the human embryo accedes to spirit-centredness, from its conception onwards it is the beneficiary of divine creative intervention which destines it to eternal happiness in heaven. John Paul II adopts the same point of view in his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*: "Man, as he is willed by God 'chosen' by him from all eternity, called, destined to grace and to glory - this is what every man is, man in his utter concreteness and reality, man in all the fullness of the mystery of which he has become a sharer in Jesus Christ and in which comes to share each one of the four billion human beings living on our planet, right from the very instant of his conception near to the heart of his mother" (Translator's underlining) (*Redemptor Hominis*, no. 13). It is surely this predestination to eternal glory, and not the moment of accession to full spirit-centredness, which makes every human being comparable to Mary in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception. "The care of the soul, she says, has been shown in the scriptures even before conception." And then she adds: "The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception has been defined. Those who dare to interfere with God's plan break the commandments and demand that God condone such evil." (Message dated 19th October 1988)

Indeed the nub of the convergence between the messages and the teaching of the Magisterium is precisely that this commandment of God, which the Church has expressed in terms of the intrinsic moral reprehensibility of every act of abortion, whatever the circumstances, is based on what the human embryo actually is and not just on moral tutiorism. It is not enough to say: "This embryo, or foetus, may now have been endowed by God with an immortal soul. It is therefore necessary to play safe and not do away with it, even if, in fact, the soul has still not been infused". The basis of the moral injunction must be ontological and not just moral. For, from the first moment of its conception, the embryo benefits from the influx of the creative love of God in such a way that it develops towards full adult, spirit-centred personhood, without any discontinuity and in full possession, right from the outset, of all that is necessary for such development, given the right environment. The creative love of God cannot be seen as an outside addition, not integral to the process, because God is more interior to us than we are to ourselves (St. Augustine). In other words the human embryo does not have to become more of a human being than it already is, in order to

reach conscious awakening to spiritual life and a spiritual love-relationship with its Maker.

Even the case of monozygotic twins is no exception. The most recent genetic research shows that they do not develop out of what, prior to the splitting, would be an undifferentiated mass of cells with no individuality. Before the twinning the cells constitute one unified living being. What is possible, however, is that they conserve in the first stages of their existence a certain toti-potentiality which enables cells which split off to constitute the nucleus of another specific and unified individual. In other words, there never is, at any stage of the twinning process, a conception, or conceptuses, which do not possess that individuation without which there can be no response to God's call to share eternal life.

The ontological ground of the universal prohibition of abortion holds good. *Donum Vitae* puts it this way: "... the fruit of human generation from the first moment of its existence, that is from the constitution of the zygote onwards, requires the unconditional respect morally due to the human being in his corporal and spiritual totality. The human being must be respected and treated as a person from conception onwards ..." (I. Respect for human embryo's 1). To deprive it of life is murder and is disobedience of the commandment. "Thou shalt not kill." One must even go further and say that in harmony with the teaching of Scripture, Tradition and the Church's Magisterium, the messages so present the absolute dominion of God over human life, that the stewardship required of husband and wife in the exercise of their power to procreate rules out all contraception. "Humble yourselves before the mighty hand of God." says Mary (undated message). "You do not have the right to interfere in the creation of a human being". This second sentence refers to the illegitimacy of fertilisation in vitro. But what holds good for the manipulation involved in such artificial methods of fertilisation holds good for the manipulation involved in artificial birth-prevention. "Human procreation requires the responsible collaboration of the spouses with the fertile love of God." *Donum Vitae*, (Introduction 5) If God creates human beings out of love, it is the open-ended act of love of the spouses in marriage which must be the place of meeting between His creative love and their procreative stewardship. The open ended mutual love of the spouses, not abusively foreclosed by some contraceptive gadget or technique, leaves to God alone the decision to intervene or not intervene in this act of love according to His transcendent creative power and purpose and the laws written by Himself into the sexual functioning of their stewardship. The dominion of the Creator over the human life which He has created is thus fully recognised. Contraception, on the other hand, denies this dominion and degrades the image of God in which the spouses have been created and the purity of the love which should flow out of it.

V. The Role of Angels.

Angels play a considerable role in the visions, especially in those which are associated with the sacrifice of the Mass. "During the Holy, Holy, Holy, (in the Mass) Our Blessed Lady came in procession with many Angels. At the raising of the Sacred Body and Blood of Our Lord Our Blessed Mother had to be supported by Angels each side of her, because she was overcome by joy and gratitude towards Our Lord; her soul was bursting with Love and Thanksgiving. There were Angels and Saints in the procession (presumably this refers back to the statement in the first sentence) and their wonder and love at the Presence of Our Lord on earth was more than one can explain."

(July 26th, 1987 ... Ireland). This is not surprising in the light of the explicit association which the Church wants the faithful to make between angels and the celebration of Mass, by making mention of all the angelic hosts in the Preface which immediately precedes the Eucharistic prayer.

What is more significant to the purpose of the messages is the association of angels with aborted children. There is the assertion, of times repeated, that aborted children have guardian angels. "Our Lady was shown coming in procession with guardian angels carrying aborted children in their arms." (December 23rd 1990). The assertion is made in the face of denial: "Another priest said the messages were wrong because angels were shown with the souls of aborted children, and there was no evidence that these souls had guardian angels. To this Our Lord replies: 'Do you think I would leave such an important thing as the creation of a soul unattended?'" (October 19th 1988). The Angels attend not only to the aborted children but to their parents, and to all of us: "The Angels carry in their hands caskets full of graces, (as they wait for the celebration of Mass) for the children's parents, for the Church and for all mankind." (September 26th 1989). Such a vision concords with the intercessory role ascribed to an angel in the Apocalypse: "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense that he should offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand." (Apoc. 8, 3-4).

The three Archangels whom the *lex orandi* of the Church's liturgy allows us to name: Michael, Gabriel and Raphael are associated by name with this intercession; which is also linked with Reparation for the evil of abortion. "The Archangels - Michael, Gabriel and Raphael - head the lines of angels. St. Gabriel brings to the world an increase of Purity through the Mass of Reparation." (September. 26th, 1989). In another message, St Raphael is associated with healing and St. Michael with defence against evil. The Mass of Reparation, is one of those which the messages request to be said on specially designated days of penance and reparation "for serious personal sin and the sins of the world especially the sin of abortion." These days are: "the Feast of the Holy Innocents, the Feast of the Archangels, and the first Friday of each month .." (Main Points in the Introduction to Divine Innocence).

At this point the question might be asked: Why do the messages make explicit the relationship between angels and aborted children? There is, indeed, a contrast between this emphasis and the small amount of attention paid, even by many fervent Catholics, either to their Guardian Angel or to the angelic hosts in general, living in communion with God. Perhaps the heart of the matter lies precisely in that contrast.

Indifference to angels on the part of practising Roman Catholics stems ultimately from the influence exercised on their Christian faith by modern materialism. Whilst holding on faithfully to the central truths of Christianity about our salvation in Christ, many Christians, not just Roman Catholics, relate these truths only to the way they affect our earth-bound existence. Christian salvation becomes nothing more than human liberation. It is clear that such an outlook will have no concern for, or even awareness of, either the immensity or the nearness of a world of spirits created by God to share in His Triune Glory, and already sharing it, totally beyond the reach of our earth-bound human senses as long as we ourselves have not reached the fulfilment of our eternal destiny.

The messages make it quite clear that what is at stake, is not so much the way this latent Catholic materialism passes over the existence of angels as such, but the way this silence throws into relief indifference to the eternal destiny of aborted children; and that from two points of view.

The first is indifference to their spirit-centred personhood which gives them the possibility of this eternal destiny. This comes out clearly in the way, in the messages, Jesus answers certain objections. Thus, as we have seen above, to the objection that those children in the Bible promised to women by angels in advance of their conception, do not prove the personhood of the conceptus, because they are only special cases, Jesus answers: "Every soul has a special destiny and that is to become a saint and to enter heaven and be with God for ever." (October 19th 1988). What is at stake here is a certain kind of mental obtuseness, having its roots in a modern materialism which undervalues the dignity of the human *conceptus* because it can be seemingly eliminated with impunity from the narrow circle of our earth-bound sense experiences. But such undervaluing is blindness to the truth that, even whilst we are seemingly so earth-bound, we are already inhabitants of heaven in the company of the angels and saints: "Set, your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3, 2-3). Our Lady says: "Sadly so many do not see their destiny or their dignity (the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of human life)." Then she adds what her Son said about angels when He was correcting a false sense of values in His hearers in St. Matthew's gospel (8.10): "You may believe me, the angels of these little ones [which our materialism makes us despise] DO stand before the Throne of God." (September 21st 1990).

The second form of indifference is heedlessness of abortion being a grave evil; a gravity which is twofold: each aborted child is murdered; this slaughter is taking place on a vast scale. Here lies the full significance of the references to the role of St. Michael the Archangel: "Throughout the Mass I saw the Archangel Michael fighting Satan in the form of a Dragon. He stood before the altar and struggled with Satan. The Dragon had in its mouth and claws this whole country, and Ireland was crushed under its back foot - but it was tearing this country (England) to pieces - just tearing it to eat it with its teeth and claws. St. Michael fought with the Dragon. It was during Mass that I heard Our Lord say: "See what will happen if you do not unite and run to the Sacraments for help and protection." "(September 22nd, 1986). England is mentioned as a kind of metropolis of abortion, but also as the dowry of Mary which Mary intends to claim back. Mary called for the conversion of England, and Jesus added that when that conversion took place, her faith would astound the world. This would bring about the reversal of an historical situation of which so many generations had been victims since the separation of England from Rome.

At the same time, because the evil is world-wide, the whole Church is involved in the struggle between St. Michael and evil. "St. Michael carried a flaming sword. Great flames leap from this terrible sword - a sword of fire against the wicked. If we choose to do nothing and do not believe, then the terrible sword will bring us all a great chastisement of the Church herself and punishments on mankind. We are being offered great graces, but if we refuse to listen, the caskets carried by the angels, instead of bringing mankind beautiful graces will, when opened, release horrible plagues and sufferings." (September 26th, 1989). Indeed, the passage of the Apocalypse, quoted above, about the angel offering the prayers of the saints to God, is inserted into descriptions of plagues embracing the whole world. Jesus also indirectly underscores the role which Apocalypse, Chapter 12 attributes to St. Michael in the defeat of evil, by

saying of His Mother: "And who will crush the head of this great evil? (abortion) The woman clothed with the sun (Apoc. 12,1) The Mother of the Hidden and Mystical Wounds! The Immaculate Mother of God." He indicates that as a result of Satan's defeat the words of the psalm have come true: "on the lips of children and babes, you have found praise." (Ps 8:2)

VI. Aborted Children and Original Sin.

From what has been said about the martyrdom of aborted children in Section III and their being washed in the blood of Jesus, it would appear that we have pre-empted any further discussion of how original sin is remitted in such children. However the objection could be raised that such pre-emption does not do justice to the reticence of Catholic tradition to make any affirmative statement about the eternal destiny of children who are not baptised and who die before they are capable of those conscious acts of knowing and willing, which would enable them to benefit from baptism of desire.

Catholic Tradition has always been firm in the dual assertion of the universal salvific Will of God, which can be proved from Scripture (I Timothy, 2,4) and the necessity of water baptism for salvation, which can be proved both from Scripture and the continuous sacramental practice of the Church. This has so far led the Church to commit unbaptised infants to the infinite mercy of God, without making a positive doctrinal statement to the effect that they enjoy the beatific vision.

Nor has the Church ever given dogmatic status to the theological hypothesis that, as unremitting original sin prevents unbaptised infants from enjoying the beatific vision, because no one in sin can be perfectly united to God, they enter a place, or state, of natural happiness. Cardinal Ratzinger says of this hypothesis: "It took the form of a secondary thesis in the service of a truth which is primary for faith in the absolute sense: the importance of baptism ... The concept of Limbo could be abandoned if there were any necessity to do so." (*Quoted from another source*). In our opinion there is necessity to do so and most theologians are doing so, because such an hypothesis does not do full justice, either to the universality of the salvific will of God or, above all, to the unspeakable mercy and loving tenderness with which He has revealed that will in the heart of Jesus, broken by our sins and out of love for us, in the course of His total self-emptying and intense suffering for us on the Cross. One would have to be a scholastic theologian with little or no feel for the impact of biblical statements and images in order to maintain the limbo hypothesis in the face of what the New Testament reveals to us about the love of Jesus for us and, in particular, for little children. "Our Lord then moved backwards and forwards in time with a reference to the Apostles trying to turn the little children away. Our Lord forbade them to do so. Our Lord blessed the children." (October 19th 1988) As the preceding quotation from Ratzinger indicates, the limbo-hypothesis does not really address the issue as to how God's universal salvific will is fulfilled towards unbaptised infants. Rather is its underlying preoccupation the avoidance of all weakening in the minds of the faithful of the obligation to baptise "But the underlying preoccupation must not be given up. Baptism has never been for faith something merely accessory and it may not now be considered as such, nor may it ever be." (*ibid*).

Does this mean that the only way forward is to continue to commend unbaptised infants to the mercy of God, without ever making any clear statement about their

having, either reached or not reached, the state of eternal happiness in heaven? We venture to suggest that this is not the only possibility. A preceding section has shown that, in the case of aborted children, an appeal can be made to the *lex orandi* of an important feast of the universal Church, the feast of the Holy Innocents, modified after the 2nd Vatican Council, to bring out more clearly the martyr status of these children. But the objection just raised requires us to go further. This particular case of doctrinal development now needs to be seen as part of a wider development, affecting all unbaptised infants, incapable of acts of knowing and loving necessary to receiving the grace of baptism of desire, and implicit, at least, in the teaching of the Council and in subsequent papal elaboration of that teaching.

The messages constantly refer to making explicit what is already implicit, or better perhaps, of making more explicit what is already contained therein. Speaking of the aborted children again. Our Lord said: "I have blessed them, you cannot change it. I command you to bless those I have blessed." And then Patricia comments under the influence of the same inspiration: "Our Lord wants the Church officially to do something for the children." (October 19th 1988) Again she comments: "Our Lord wishes the Church to claim the aborted children as martyrs to the truths and teachings of the Holy Catholic Church. He said that such a document would confirm the teaching of His Church and is signed with His Blood and witnessed with the blood of the aborted children." (February 11th, 1991).

The statement "such a document would confirm the teaching of His Church" makes it quite clear that there is no question of trying to impose the content of a private revelation on the whole Church, nor of adding to the deposit of faith which the Church has the solemn duty to defend in its integrity. Rather is it a question of bringing to the explicit notice of all the faithful something which is already there in the deposit of faith and which has a scriptural basis. Many scriptural references were given to the Church to look at as a basis for claiming the aborted children" (ibid). This making explicit of what is already there is also expressed in terms of a binding in heaven of what will be bound on earth. The implication here is not that something new takes place in heaven as a result of what is decided upon earth. Precisely because doctrinal statement is at stake, and not just pastoral decision-making or discipline, there is a making explicit of a part of that truth which, because it has come from heaven as revelation, has always been bound, that is true, in heaven. "We cannot put limits on God. If the Church pronounces that the aborted children are to be considered Martyrs to the truths and teachings of the Holy Catholic Church, then what is bound on earth will be bound in heaven but the Holy Spirit has gone before that pronouncement - God does not trail behind men or His Church" (Undated commentary of the Constitution on the Liturgy. (Nos. 7-8, 106).

Nevertheless, as this quotation shows, there is a binding in heaven which follows the binding on earth in the sense that what is bound on earth is seen to have heavenly authority for thus being made normative. In other words, doctrinal explicitation could not be undertaken by the Church unless it were seen to be vested with the authority of heaven to be really and truly Divine Revelation. "Once again I appeal directly to the Holy Father. Stretch out your hand. My son, to these little ones. You have the authority to claim them as martyrs to the Truths and Teachings of the Holy Catholic Church on earth. You have the authority to open the way for them to enter the Church Triumphant in heaven." (February 11th, 1991). This last sentence implies a heavenly fruit of earthly pastoral decision-making which goes beyond ratification by heaven of earthly

doctrinal explicitation. What this fruit is and how it is possible belong to the next two sections.

How, then, are we to understand a doctrinal explicitation which fits the case of aborted children within the wider context of all infants incapable of baptism of desire, who die without receiving water-baptism? The ecclesiological and sacramental content of this explicitation must be left to the next section in which the share of the Church in the salvation of aborted children is specifically considered. At this point the christological content needs to be clarified, that is the answer to the question: How is the salvation of these children and the required remission of original sin, related to the universal salvific will of God as it has become effective in the Redemptive acts of Jesus?

The Church has always taught that, in all descendants of our first parents, original sin is contracted, not personally committed. A human being cannot possess personhood except in and through interpersonal relationships with other human beings. Hence, whilst as issuing immediately from the creative love of God, the human spirit cannot bear the stain of original sin, because God cannot create sin, nevertheless it cannot exist in this world except within a web of sin-stained inter-personal relationships which cause it to contract original sin from the first moment of that existence. This is the meaning of the classical scholastic teaching about the difference between Adam and ourselves. Adam committed personal sin and thereby infected human nature with sin. We inherit a sin-stained human nature, the basis of our solidarity with others, and this sin-stained nature infects our personhood.

However, as St. Paul points out the new solidarity which we are given in the grace of Christ, the new Adam, is much more radical and profound than our sin-stained solidarity in the first Adam: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." (Romans 5,17). If this superiority of solidarity in the grace of Christ really is the case, do all the beneficiaries of it have to await the celebration of water baptism before receiving this benefit?

Recent statements of the Magisterium would seem to indicate otherwise because on the one hand, original sin cannot deface an image and likeness which the human spirit possesses by issuing immediately from the creative love of God and, on the other, Jesus has, by His Incarnation, entered into real solidarity with every human being who comes into existence, it would seem at least possible to postulate the seed of Redemptive grace in each human being as part of that solidarity. In his first encyclical: *Redemptor Hominis*, John Paul II, quoting *Gaudium et Spes*, states: "by the Incarnation the Son of God, has united Himself, in a certain way, to every man." (His underlining). (*Redemptor Hominis*, no 13, §1 - *Gaudium et Spes* no 22, §2). A little later on, the Pope draws out of the phrase: "in a certain way" a meaning which gives a redemptive dimension to the relationship between Jesus and every human being. 'It is a question then of man in all his truth, in his fullness. It is not a question of man "in the abstract", but of the real, "concrete", "historical" man. It is each and every man, because each and every one has been included in the mystery of the Redemption, and Jesus has united Himself to each one through this mystery.' (ibid 3).

Or again, in the last paragraph of this section, he states that through Jesus, every human being shares in the plenitude of a mystery of Divine predestination. "Man, as he has been "willed" by God, chosen by him from all eternity, called, destined to grace and to glory: that is what "Every" man is, man in his concreteness and reality; that is

what man is in all the fullness of a mystery in which he has become a sharer in Jesus Christ and in which shares each one of the four billion human beings living on our planet, from the first moment of his conception near the heart of His mother." (Our underlining) (ibid). In the messages, Mary would seem to be echoing the intimacy and the efficacy of the relationship between Jesus, Her Son, and each human being to which these papal statements seem to point, when she says: "I show you this great sorrow because still today - in the slaughter of the innocent ones - Divine Innocence finds no welcome - even before He is born in innocence in a newly created soul." (Abortion). (Eve of Immaculate Conception, 1988).

To the objection that the implications of these statements would make water baptism unnecessary, it must be replied that exactly the contrary is the case; they point to a spiritual reality which increases the urgency of baptism. If, before he comes into this world, a human being is already re-orientated away from sin by a solidarity with Christ in grace, ontologically prior to the sin-stained interpersonal relationships with the descendants of the first Adam, then the urgency of water-baptism is increased in the sense of being the indispensable continuation of this graced re-orientation.

In other words, as soon as such a human being comes into the world, he must be immediately incorporated into the whole web of redeemed interpersonal relationships which constitute the Church as the body of Christ. He must be baptised into this body, so as to be protected from, and enabled to fight against, that network of sin-stained relationships which the New Testament calls the world. Thus John Paul II immediately qualifies what he says about the unique relationship between Christ and every human being by mentioning the role of the Church. Immediately after the quotation from *Gaudium et Spes*, he adds: "In consequence the Church recognises her fundamental duty by acting in such a way that this union (between Christ and each human being) might be continually actualised and renewed." (no 13, 9). Immediately following our second quotation, he says: "Every man comes into the world by conception in the womb of his mother and in being born from his mother and it is precisely because of the mystery of Redemption (our underlining) that he is entrusted to the solicitude of the Church." (ibid. 3).

Furthermore, the last quotation made above, by mentioning the existence of four billion people on the planet - a number now greatly increased - gives the reason why some kind of explication of doctrine in the area we have been discussing, has become of paramount importance. One could express it this way. In relation to this huge world population there are now, at a low estimate, roughly fifty million abortions every year. If one were to suppose that the first Apostles had succeeded in converting to Christianity, in their generation, every single person in the whole of the Roman Empire, the total number, about 50,000,000 converted in this whole generation, would be equivalent to the total number of abortions in one year at the present time. Hence the urgency of showing that the universal salvific will of God, as shown to us in the costly and bloody sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, can in the very area where the power of wickedness seems greatest, be the source of immense spiritual riches for the Church. "On the day My Church claims the little slaughtered ones, millions will be added to My Church in heaven. Crucified Innocence will be Triumphant." (February 11th, 1991). Jesus also uses the figure of Abraham and his posterity to show how this triumph will indeed be commensurate with the extent of the evil to be overcome: "The little slaughtered, aborted children are now in their millions, like the stars, and I will have them shine like bright stars for My cause, the triumph of the crucified innocence.

Have faith and I will raise up to Abraham these little ones that so many consider lifeless stones." (Epiphany 1993).

VII. The Share of the Church on Earth in the Salvation of Aborted Children.

(1) The Teaching of the Church.

Scripture and Tradition teach that the Church, as both invisible mystery and visible institution, is the Body of Christ and His Spouse. Tradition sees St. John's portrayal of Mary standing at the foot of the Cross, as a clear intimation that, at the moment of Jesus' death on the Cross, the Church begins to exist as His Spouse. At the foot of the Cross, Mary is not only the Mother of Jesus, offering Him in total self-sacrifice to the Father, but she also moves into a spousal relationship to the mystery of salvation, when it is accomplished in the putting forth of the Spirit of Jesus on to His Spouse the Church in an act of spousal embrace, (John 19,30). At that moment, Mary is the only human being, other than the humanity of Jesus Himself, totally available to that love of God which is the very Person of the Holy Spirit. Thus, as she beholds her dead Son, now to be taken down from the Cross, she pre-contains in herself, the entire Church, publicly to be made manifest by the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.

The Church is also the Body of Christ, not just metaphorically, but as a sacramental continuation of His very physical being. This St. John indicates when he states that blood and water flowed from the pierced heart of Jesus after His death on the Cross (19,34). Catholic tradition sees, in the blood, the sacrament of the Eucharist and, in the water, the sacrament of Baptism, that is the two sacraments which are constitutive of the Church. It is because the Church has issued from the very physical Body of Jesus, that she is a mystery of salvation, which is indivisibly invisible, in the spousal love of the Holy Spirit which has been communicated to her, and visible, as a structured institution. In other words she is, over and above the seven distinct sacramental rites administered within her, the total sacrament, as it were, (*veluti sacramentum in Lumen Gentium*, no 1) of our salvation. Thus, speaking of this wonderful spousal birth of Christ's body, the Church, and comparing it to the coming to be of Eve from the first Adam, the Constitution on the Liturgy of Vatican II says: "For it was from the side of Christ as He slept the sleep of death on the Cross that there came forth "the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church." (Here the Council uses the word sacrament without qualifying it with a "veluti", because it is quoting a Holy Saturday lesson from the Tridentine Roman Missal.

These two aspects of the reality of the Church, the spousal and the bodily-sacramental, are brought together into one by the passage in Ephesians which compares Christian marriage to the spousal relationship between Jesus and His Church: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that she should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5,25-27). The reference to Jesus giving Himself up for the Church recalls the historical fact, recorded by St. John, of Jesus dying in an ecstasy of love, which brought the Church into being by the bridal kiss of the Holy Spirit. The washing of the water by the word* recalls the historical fact of the flow both of blood and water from the pierced heart of Jesus, because the washing of water in baptism, although prior in time, in a Christian life, to

the reception of the Eucharist, is only fruitful for regeneration, by virtue of the sacrificial shedding of Christ's blood, sacramentally contained in the Eucharist (see Section 1).

* [Patricia: By the children witnessing to the Word with their lives are they not washed by the Blood and Water from Christ's side?]

In the text of Ephesians there is another aspect of the sponsal relationship of the Church with Jesus which must not escape our notice. St. Paul says that Jesus gave Himself up in an ecstasy of love in order that His bride the Church might be without any spot or blemish. But who in the Church has always been without spot, that is immaculate, from the very beginning of earthly existence? The answer must be that there is only one such person: MARY. Therefore, even if St. Paul was not explicitly aware of it, his words do in fact contain the truth that Jesus has succeeded in giving Himself a perfectly immaculate bride because of the relation of Mary to His act of Redemption. This is why, Mary standing at the foot of the Cross, pre-contains in herself the whole Church. All holiness, subsequently brought about in the members of the Church, can be directly related to her. She is truly *Mater Ecclesiae* – Mother of the Church.

Yet Mary is not the mother of the ordained ministry. She is mother of all ordained ministers, in so far as they are baptised persons, called to holiness, but their actual acts of ministry do not relate directly to her motherhood. St. John makes it clear that ministry, as well as the holiness of Mary, comes directly from the self-giving, sponsal love of Jesus: "And when He had said this. He breathed on them, and saith unto them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John 20,22-23). The point of clarification is this: the last breath of Jesus on the Cross, in which He put forth His Holy Spirit on to His Bride the Church, is now continued in a breathing of the Spirit into His Apostles, which gives them a ministerial power of reconciliation with God to be exercised in union with, and as a fruit of, the reconciling power of Christ's own act of Redemption. In other words their ministerial power is a fruit of Jesus' sponsal love for His Church, which is just as immediate and direct as the holiness of Mary. When Jesus designated St John as son to His mother, He also entrusted her to the ministry of the beloved disciple. This means that the motherly role of women does not encompass or include ministry but is entrusted with the spiritual nurture which leads to the sacrificial reality, present to Mary in Jesus hanging on the Cross and Sacramentally made present to the Church in the ordained Ministry.

This is what John Paul II means by pointing out, in *Mulierem Dignitatis* that the Church has two dimensions, mutually irreducible the one to the other; the Marian and the Petrine. Rather are they given to each other as being complementary for the ultimate good of all the members of the Church. Ministry is at the service of the Church's holiness. Holiness is the purpose for which the institutional Church exists. Conversely there cannot be an exercise of ministry without a minimum of collaboration with the sanctifying grace of baptism, even if the efficacy of the sacraments does not depend on the holiness of the person who administers them. In fact much more is required than this bare minimum, in order that ministry should produce the fruits which Jesus intends.

In the whole history of the Church there is no more enlightening illustration of how Jesus intends sponsal holiness and ministry to work in complementarity than the life and writings of the woman whom Paul VI made a doctor of the Church: St. Catherine

of Siena. She lived out a life of heroic self-sacrifice and penance in reparation for the ills which beset Church and society in her time. Stemming from her spousal intimacy with Jesus were her constant exhortations to ecclesiastics of every rank in the Church, including two popes, either to be converted from sinful living or to show greater pastoral generosity. Yet she always shows filial obedience and an affectionate and delicate deference towards these ordained ministers. The theological reason she gives for this is the derivation of ministry directly from the blood of Jesus which was shed for us. "Because the Vicar (the Pope) has enough strength and power to close and open the gates of eternal life, are we going to be corrupt members, children in rebellion against their father and foolish enough to act against him? We are aware that without him we can do nothing. If you set yourself up against the holy Church, how will you be able to participate in the blood of Christ? The Church is inseparable from Christ. It is she who gives us and administers to us the sacraments, and the sacraments give us the life which they receive from the blood of Christ; and before this blood was given to us, no virtue was sufficient to gain for us eternal life. How can we be bold enough to despise this blood? (Letter to Nicolas Soderini).

The distinction, in unity, between the Church as Spouse and the Church as Body enables us to have a right understanding of how the Church shares in the universal salvific power of the blood of Jesus. As Spouse the Church really is a subject of spiritual activity distinct from Christ and, therefore, capable of taking spiritual initiative in collaboration with Him. It is through His self-effacement in the giving of His love, which is the very Person of the Holy Spirit, that Jesus has, been able to make of His Spouse a spiritually self-determining subject. This is what He means by saying to His Apostles, in the discourse after the Last Supper: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John 16,7). Jesus substantiates this promise when, in an ecstasy of love unto death, He causes the Holy Spirit to bring forth from His physical body, already dead, the whole sacrament of the Church in the flow of blood and water. He no more exercises physical control over what is happening, because henceforth, through the power of the Spirit, He wants to live invisibly in the Church, leaving visible initiative to His Apostles, their successors, and, in general, to all the baptised members of His Church. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations ... and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28,20).

The Church is, therefore, not just a passive receptacle of the redeeming grace of Christ. She is an active agent of that grace for our salvation and sanctification. Jesus commits His grace - giving sacraments to His Church in such a way that it is only through the mediation of her spiritual initiative, that the sacraments are effectively administered. Furthermore there is a whole sphere of supernatural efficacy belonging to the Church which is of wider application than the efficacy strictly attached to the performance of sacramental rites. Theologians describe the source of this wider sphere of efficacy as *ex opere operantis ecclesiae*. It relates to what is performed by the Church as a distinct subject of supernatural action and operation. The practice of gaining indulgences, now no longer wide-spread, is one of the ways in which the Church has inculcated into the hearts of the faithful the possibility of a supernatural efficacy *ex opere operantis ecclesiae*.

Nevertheless the existence which the Church possesses as a distinct subject of supernatural initiative derives directly and wholly from Christ. She is not like a bride who, in human marriage, comes towards her husband in an equality of love which has

its source in an independent life and experience. She is one Body with Him because she issued from His physical Body on the Cross. This oneness now takes a sacramental form. It is union with the very Risen Body of Jesus through a sacramental economy, instituted by Jesus, which transcends the limits of space and time. Where the sacramental Eucharistic body of Jesus is, there is the Church as His Body-Spouse. "Really sharing in the body of the Lord in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, we are taken up into communion with Him and with one another." (*Lumen Gentium*, no 7, §1).

Two consequences flow from this for the sacramental efficacy of the Church. The sacraments which she administers are always the acts of Christ Himself. "By his power he is present in the sacraments so that when anybody baptises, it is really Christ Himself who baptises." (This is a quotation of St. Augustine.) (*Sacrosanctwn Concilium* no 7, §1). Thus the seven sacraments are efficacious *ex opere operato*, that is with a supernatural efficacy which derives from the valid performance of the rite according to the command of Christ and not from subjective dispositions be they those of the minister or the recipient. The second consequence is that the efficacy *ex opere operands ecclesiae*, that is proper to the praying, interceding and acting Church, is intimately conjoined to the efficacy *ex opere operato*, because it is never separable from the universal efficacy of Christ's act of redemption. In a passage just quoted from the Constitution of the Liturgy and to which Patricia herself was referred by the messages, this truth is expressed clearly several times. "Christ, indeed, always associates the Church with himself in this great work (the sacramental acts of the liturgy) in which God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified. The Church is His beloved Bride who calls to her Lord, and through him offers worship to the eternal Father., (no 7, §2). "In it (the liturgy) full public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is by the Head and his members." (ibid. §3). "From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of his Body, which is the Church ..." (§4).

Because, on the one hand, the Paschal Mystery of Christ is the expression of the universal salvific will of God towards the human race and, because, on the other, the Church is in bodily-sacramental union with the Paschal Mystery, through originating in its visible, historical, and bodily enactment, it follows that the being and action of the Church are co-extensive with the universal salvific will of God, at least insofar as it concerns the human race. The Vatican Council teaches this, by setting the entire exposition of the nature of the Church in *Lumen Gentium*, within the framework of an introductory section of this document which states: "... the Church, in Christ, is in the nature of a sacrament - a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men." (*Lumen Gentium*, no §1). There is, then, a sacramental relationship between the Church and every human being without exception. This is the true meaning of the traditional statement: "*Extra ecclesiam, nulla salus*": Outside the Church there is no salvation. It does not mean that all pagans, who reach salvation, have been crypto-Catholics during their life on earth.

What is at stake is not subjective experience, but objective means of salvation. All the means used by God, outside the Catholic Church, to draw men to salvation in Christ stand in an objective sacramental relationship to the fullness of the sacramental means to be found in the Catholic Church, because that fullness is inseparable from God's universal salvific will. The Decree on Ecumenism says this explicitly of Christians who belong to Christian Communion other than the Roman Catholic Church: "It follows that the separated churches and communities as such, though we believe they suffer from the defects already mentioned, have been by no means deprived of

significance and importance in the mystery of salvation. For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church." (Decree on Ecumenism (no 4. §4). (Our underlining). The statement made about non-believers and the truth and goodness to be found in their midst is weaker: "Nor shall divine providence deny the assistance necessary for salvation to those who, without any fault of theirs, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God, and who, not without grace, strive to lead a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is considered by the Church to be preparation of the Gospel." (*Lumen Gentium* no. 16). But this reference to the tradition concept of *praeparatio evangelica*, to be found in many of the Church Fathers, also points to an objective relationship between such truth and goodness and the sacramental fullness to be found in the Catholic Church alone. At the same time, because it is only preparation and not fullness, it does not render the communication of sacramental fullness, through the preaching of the Gospel, inoperative and unnecessary. Rather does it call for it all the more urgently, even as the solidarity of unbaptised infants with the Redemptive Incarnation of Christ, calls for water-baptism the moment that their entry into the world makes it possible for them to be integrated into all the graced interpersonal relationships which constitute membership of the Body of Christ.

Furthermore the concept of *praeparatio evangelica* shows that the sacramental solidarity deriving from the unity between Christ and His Body the Church is not limited to space. Even solidarity on the purely human plane is not so limited, because human culture is passed on from one generation to the next. All the more so then will the lifting of this solidarity to a sacramental plane have an application, the universality of which will have a retroactive effect on those who precede its manifestation at a particular moment of history. The epistle to the Hebrews, after sketching out an economy of faith which stretches from creation until the coming of Christ, says that this faith only derives efficacy from this promised Christ insofar as it establishes solidarity with those who have the explicit link with Christ in time: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." (11,39-40) (Our underlining).

Hence the modification of the feast of the Holy Innocents, subsequent to the Council, to make explicit the full martyr status of these children, can now appear as a particular case of that heightened awareness of sacramental solidarity which is one of the most precious fruits of the Council's teaching about the nature of the Church. Hence also the possibility of affirming that aborted children, at whatever point in time they were murdered, do not, by being washed in the Blood of Jesus, bypass the sacramental economy of the Church, of which baptism is an integral part, even if they bypass a celebration of water-baptism by a faith-community at a particular place and time.

As an autonomous subject of spiritual self-determination, the Church is not only Spouse but Mother. She is not just the purely passive receptacle of the graces of Mary's motherhood and holiness. Rather does she ensure, by her own active motherhood, that Mary's motherhood and holiness should reach to all the members of the Body of Christ without exception. Yet in the very fulfilling of this role, she is pre-contained in Mary, because her Head is Mary's Divine Son and because she is working towards a perfection of holiness which is already summed up in Mary's glorified body and soul in heaven. Both Mary and the Church are mothers and yet neither can reach to all the fullness of motherhood without the other.

These truths are lucidly expressed in a reading of the breviary, to which Patricia has been directed, with the instruction to submit it to the scrutiny of a priest. The reading is taken from a homily of Isaac Stella on the feast of the Assumption. The key phrases, indicated by Patricia, are these. "Mary and the Church: each is Mother, each is virgin; both conceive in holiness from the same spirit; both bring forth a child without sin before God the Father. Mary gave birth to the absolutely sinless Head for the Body; the Church gave birth, in forgiveness of every sin, to the Body for the Head; each (the Church and Mary) is the mother of Christ, but neither without the other gives birth to the whole Christ." The wonderful conjoining and interweaving of the motherhood of Mary and the motherhood of the Church is related by *Lumen Gentium* to the activity of preaching and baptising, where it is manifest that the Church brings forth children by the power of the Holy Spirit. "By preaching and baptism she brings forth sons, who are conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of God, to a new and immortal life." (no 64). In the sentence which precedes this one, the same passage states that the Church can only do this because she has first interiorised the word of God in imitation of Mary and in contemplation of her sanctity. This interiorisation is not just an act of the intelligence. It contains the whole being of the Church which must like Mary's womb become a dwelling place of Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God. Thus, in the exercise of her own motherhood, the Church is always referred back to the perfect faith and love by which Mary brought Jesus into this world: "Imitating the mother of her Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, she keeps intact faith, firm hope, and sincere charity." (ibid).

The climax of this intertwining of the two acts of motherhood is the celebration of the Eucharist. This is doubtless why so many of the messages emphasise the relationship of Mary to the Eucharistic mystery. One could put it this way: By the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary conceived the Son of God incarnate in human flesh and blood in her womb. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Lke 1,35). In the celebration of the Eucharist the words of consecration pronounced by the priest in the name of Christ, produce, by the power of the same Holy Spirit, the Eucharistic body of Jesus in the womb of the Church. "Let your Spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy, that they may become for us the body and blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ". (Eucharistic Prayer no 2). The womb which receives this unspeakable gift of the Spirit, the sacramental body and blood of Jesus, is none other than the community of believers who make themselves into such a receptacle by their faith, hope and love. But they cannot do this except by being sustained by, and enfolded in, a holiness which is none other than Mary's. "The Church, therefore, in her apostolic work too, rightly looks to her who gave birth to Christ, who was thus conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, in order that through the Church he could be born and increase in the hearts of the faithful. In her life the Virgin has been the model of that motherly love with which all who join in the Church's apostolic mission for the regeneration of mankind should be animated." (*Lumen Gentium*, no 65).

(2) The Content of the Messages.

However imperfect the above account may be of the teaching of the Church about her intimate nature, we remain firmly convinced that there is nothing in the messages, about the share which the Church has in the salvation both of aborted children and, in general, of all those in whom sin has wounded and crucified the indwelling Divine

Innocence, which does not have a firm doctrinal basis in that teaching. However startling some of the statements or injunctions of the messages may seem at first sight, they are, in fact, only practical application of that teaching. Let us examine briefly the main aspects of these applications.

In a message given in July 25th, 1992 Jesus says: "Their death and martyrdom, when claimed by the Church as true martyrdom, will be a mighty force against the evil of abortion. The Church has the power to open the gates of heaven to these martyrs. Their companions (the Holy Innocents) wait with open arms to embrace them." A little further on: "How much longer will they hang on the Cross of your disbelief? How much longer will their Crucified Innocence be ignored and go unrecognised." It is clear from this and similar statements that the words: "The Church has the power to open the gates of heaven to these martyrs" does not mean that the aborted children owe their salvation to the Church, rather than to Jesus, that is to the Church, as distinct from Jesus. The proof of this is already contained in the word martyr which relates them directly to the saving blood of Jesus, as Jesus Himself states in a sentence a little further up: "I tell you again, they died in the blood of my Crucifixion, their innocence crucified." (ibid) (And see whole of our section 3). They do mean, however, that, by being conjoined to the universal saving efficacy of Christ's paschal mystery, the Church's power to actively sanctify (see above) does really share in the salvation of these children. Jesus intimates this with great delicacy by pointing to the request he makes in the Gospel to be baptised by St. John the Baptist (Undated reflection on the texts of the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord). At this point, Patricia says that she understands the words of Jesus: "I have need to be baptised by you" as truly relating to the sacramental role of the Church, even if she is unable to conceptualise it: "This is important but I am not sure why. As far as I understand (with the heart) it is that heaven is asking the Church, with regard to the aborted children, to do what she can and God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, will do the rest."

Elsewhere, Jesus does in fact say quite clearly that the sacramental instrumentality of His Church is conjoined to His universal efficacious act of Redemption: "This Mercy has been offered to mankind but grace and the sacraments must come to the people via the discipline of My Church, through the hands of the priests. It is for the Church to decide and for the people to be obedient to the Church. It is not a decision for individuals but for the Church - the Magisterium of the Church." (July 9th, 1989). It could be objected that the people mentioned here are those who can be reached by sacramental acts in the course of their life on earth. But the declaration: "It is for the Church to decide", points in a different direction. In any case, from what was said in the previous exposition of the Church's doctrinal teaching about herself, it is clear that no limits of space or time need be put on the sacramental instrumentality of the Church to which Jesus is referring. Consequently a real share of the Church in the salvation of aborted children must not be excluded. The statement is also balanced by a re-affirmation of the absolute priority of Jesus' own act of Redemption: "Am I bound by My own Sacraments? Ask the Church! What does the Church teach? Does the Church put limits on my Mercy? You have not given all the messages to the Church! A full investigation is needed." (ibid).

Furthermore, the reference of Jesus to individuals not being able to decide, besides underlining the role of the Church's Magisterium in doctrinal development, raises another issue, which needs to be clearly faced if heresy is to be avoided in the drafting of ceremonies of reparation for parents, or others, who have been guilty of the sin of abortion. On no account whatsoever must they be allowed to say, or to pray, at the end

of such a ceremony: "I now give thanks for the entry of my child into heaven." This is because the Church's sacramental instrumentality, precisely because it transcends the barriers of space and time in union with the universal mediation of Christ, does not fall within the limits of the space-bound and time-bound acts of an individual, however fervent his intercession or reparation may be.

The Church has always instilled this simple yet profound truth into the hearts of the faithful by the way she has taught prayer for the souls in Purgatory. It is perfectly legitimate for me to pray for a soul which has departed this life, or even to make application in my own mind, of the grace of a plenary indulgence to that soul. But the connections which I make in my mind, I have no means of imposing in a sphere of solidarity in the saving grace of Christ, which the soul has now entered and which totally transcends all my limited space-time connections. Therefore, I must be open to my prayer contributing to this solidarity in grace in a way which is not less wonderful than, but might be different from, the limited connections made in my mind. In plain terms, because I do not even know whether the person, for whom I am praying or wish to gain the plenary indulgence, is in Purgatory or not, I must be open to the possibility of my offering benefiting some other person or persons.

Similarly prayer and acts of Reparation, on the part of those who have been involved in abortion, can so be taken up into the sacramental action of the Church, reaching out to the whole of the human race without limit of space or time, that, insofar as they are the fruit of an open-ended faith and love which lays down no conditions, they truly reach the souls of aborted children. On the feast of the Epiphany, 1993 Jesus said to Patricia: "Give Me the gift of your faith so that I may present it to these children:" Then Patricia comments: "This is a little difficult to explain. Our Lord is the King of all creation, yet, in humility. He made this request to the Church and to each of us. I am unable to explain the beauty of the request of our faith, which is in some way linked to the salvation of the children's souls and the souls of those who repent of the sin against them. It is as if Our Lord was putting Himself in the role of the Magi and bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to God the Father. I can't explain the beauty of what You show me. Lord, forgive me! Perhaps the Church and the Priests could explain."

The same mystery of a real connection between the eternal destiny of aborted children and faith in the members of the Church could be approached from the angle of the relation of circumincession between the motherhood of Mary and the motherhood of the Church, outlined at the end of the previous section on the doctrine of the Church. Certain visions of the way Mary is shown to relate both to the aborted children and to members of the Church on earth, whether their parents or not, would seem to provide an apt illustration. "Our Lady came with the children again. She came as the Mother of the Hidden Wounds. She opened out her arms and the Mystical Wounds were shown on her hands. Small children stood close to her; they looked like starving children - starved of love. They were grey-looking, with large expressionless eyes. It was sad the way they stayed near Our Lady. She seemed their only hope - the only one who loved them. How deeply their sadness affected me! My heart felt their sadness and loneliness." Then Our Lady speaks: "Time is short. The First Friday approaches. Do not disappoint me or the souls I have drawn to God's Mercy!" Afterwards further details of the vision are shown: "The parents of these children are being shown; they are shown apart from their children but they look with anguish towards them. Our Lady is trying her best to help them but her efforts are limited by our lack of co-operation, slowness and complacency. Our Lady comes like a beggar." (July 29th,

1989). These concrete details correspond exactly to the truths we have tried to outline in conceptual language in the preceding section.

It is not that the intercessory power of Mary is not so rich and awesome that it is capable of crushing the dragon's head (as Jesus says in another place) (See the message quoted at the end of the section on Angels), that is of wiping out the evil which is at the root of all this abortion. It is precisely the power of Mary's Mystical Wounds which makes the children stand close to her and look, in hope, towards her, for the love of which they have been starved. Later on the same evening, Patricia sees Mary as the source of protection of millions upon millions of aborted children stretching right across the sky. But at the same time Mary comes as a beggar or leaves Patricia feeling sad, as in the evening vision, because it is in the very nature of the power and the love, vested in her motherhood, to make room for our co-operation. The motherhood of Mary is rich with a plenitude that can only exist through the motherhood of the Church, thus making room for, and even begging for, the co-operation of each and every member of that Church. "Our Lady was deeply grieved and her heart was wounded with a great wound and deep pain. All Our Lady of the Mystical Wounds had obtained for us she had to return to God the Father and say: "The graces are not wanted or appreciated." All Our Lady wanted in return for such wonderful graces and treasures was the Mass of Reparation on the First Friday in the community. For months now we have been unable to do this – we have no priest." (8th December, 1990). The greatness of such love is the room which it makes for the most ungrateful of us, because of its humility. What can we reply? Perhaps this, which was written by an evangelical Protestant in the England of the 18th Century:

“Place us near the accursed wood,
where thou didst thy life resign,
near as once thy mother stood,
partners of the pangs divine;
bid us feel her sacred smart,
feel the sword that pierced her heart.”
(Charles Wesley, Eucharistic Hymns, no 22, verse 2)

Since however the aborted children belong as martyrs to the Church Triumphant in heaven (Messages quoted in section III, section VI and the first message of this section), priority must be given, within the solidarity in grace into which the sacramental mediation of the Church enables us to enter, not to the movement of intercession and reparation towards the children *ex opere operantis ecclesiae*, that is through the interceding and celebrating Church, but to a movement of them towards us. This is the reason given by the messages for asking the Church's Magisterium to make a pronouncement about their martyr status: "Their death and martyrdom, when claimed by the Church as true martyrdom, will be a mighty force against the evil of abortion." (Message quoted at outset of this section). "The forces of evil are claiming human sacrifices of millions of children. Heaven wishes to defeat the evil through these innocent ones, but needs the co-operation of the Church. The grace can only be given through the Church." (Commentary of Patricia on words of Jesus, Epiphany, 1993.)

The claiming and naming of the aborted ones by the Magisterium is, therefore, seen by the messages as a way for the Church to enter more fully into a rich spiritual heritage which is already hers by the power of Jesus' blood which in their martyrdom, has washed these little ones of original sin. One could even interpret their "starved" look when they are with Mary, and also their "greyness" (all details of visions reproduced

above) as meaning that they are being deprived of a sharing of love into which they want to enter with us. In this sense, it is not possible to say to a woman who had an abortion: "You can by prayer and reparation cause your child to enter heaven." (For reasons, see earlier). But it is possible to say to her: "Your child is now with Jesus and is full of love for you and praying for you. [E.V 99 'Living in the Lord'] He, or she, wants you to recognise and also enter into that loving relationship." It is, however, a possibility to be used with pastoral tact and discretion until the Magisterium has made some kind of pronouncement on the subject. It is also possible to say to such a mother: Because you are participating in a Mass of Reparation, because you recognise the presence of Jesus in this Mass, you are able to name your child. The two acts of recognition go together just as they did for Mary Magdalen, the former sinner, who recognised the Risen Jesus, as soon as she recognised her name being pronounced by Jesus.

There is a striking paradox in the way the messages speak of the recognition of aborted children as martyrs being a powerful means of defeating the powers of evil. For the powers of evil are, thereby, being defeated by their own fruits. This is the paradox of the Paschal Mystery itself. Sin brought about the crucifixion of Jesus on the Cross and His Cross overcomes sin. St. Paul puts it this way "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (I Corinthians 2, 7-8). In other words Satan would, as it were, have drawn back from leading men into the sin of crucifying the Son of God, if He could have known how, in the Divine Plan, this ignominious death was to inflict total and irreversible defeat upon him.

This is the nub of the whole spirituality of Divine Innocence as it applies not only to the limit situation of aborted children, but to all those who are examples of crucified innocence, by being the innocent victims of other people's sins, or, even of their own sins, crucifying innocence within themselves. It is Jesus, the totally innocent crucified Victim, who enables us to turn the tables on all the forces of evil, including our own sinfulness, by turning the effects of our defeat into the means of our victory. "Do you see this cross? This is the cross of Revolution. Not a revolution of violence and death and terror, but a revolution of love and mercy, compassion and reconciliation. Through this cross the innocent victims are united to My Crucifixion; there is not one single drop of innocent blood that is shed in vain. Where that blood is spilt, the ground becomes holy in My sight. See, My people suffer horribly - the innocent all over again for the guilty. This cross will spread all over the world. The cross will be like a flag of victory; those who recognise its meaning and power will hold it aloft, above evil, and in the face of injustice and oppression. The power in innocent blood has been proved in My Crucifixion. Will I allow the blood of the innocent ones to be wasted? It is, to Me, the most precious of offerings." (Words of Jesus on June 18th, 1985). In this message, besides referring to His own Crucifixion, Jesus is referring to a crucifix which He wants made and made known, composed of a cross with two figures on it, one on each side. One figure is a crucified child and the other a child still on the cross but in glory and triumphant. The two figures portray how, in the very process of being victims of evil, the little, the powerless and the weak can be triumphant witnesses of the triumph of Jesus in His Paschal mystery. That we can all be triumphant in the midst of our sinfulness and weakness, is forcibly brought home by the two different texts of The Stations of the Cross presented in the Reparation booklet (See quotations in introduction above).

In the messages, Jesus makes use of the life and mission of St. John the Baptist as they are portrayed in the gospels, to show how the two movements of solidarity in the communion of saints, the one coming from the triumphant martyr children in heaven, to the Church Militant on earth and the other moving in intercession and reparation *ex opere operands ecclesiae* towards the triumphant in heaven converge, as it were, into one living stream of grace and love. We have already seen how aborted children are a continuation, in the Church, of the reality of John the Baptist's martyrdom, as a death for moral truth, intimately linked to the very Person of Jesus and, thereby, constituting a baptism in Jesus' redeeming Blood. (See section III above). But the messages go further than this in the identification of the destiny of the aborted children with the mission of John the Baptist. As he was forerunner to the full gift of salvation in the Person of Jesus, so are they forerunners to a triumph of Divine Innocence which Jesus wants to communicate to our world. "These children, whom I wish My Church to claim along with the First Holy Innocents, have an important role in the dawn of Holy Innocence and will be My Heralds of that Dawn (the wording here is a clear reference to the Benedictus which Patricia has been asked to examine closely), so that I may give light to poor sinners and extend to them my loving kindness in Confession and guide them into the way of peace." (Words of Jesus about Baptism from an early message). On the other hand the baptism of repentance, preached by John the Baptist, is a model of that public penance and reparation, for the sin of abortion and all other sins against Divine Innocence, in which all the members of the Church must eventually be involved. "As the Gospel was being proclaimed at Mass I heard the words: This is a Baptism of Repentance.'" (Reading about John the Baptist, baptising in the Jordan.) Our Lord then said of the service for aborted children and Mass and Confession for repentant parents: "This is also a Baptism of Repentance" meaning: The Repentance of the Church (in sorrow); the repentance of the people (mankind - for sins against the innocent); the repentance of the parents (contrition for abortions); the repentance of mankind (for any crime against the innocent)" (December 3rd 1988).

It is the very Person of John the Baptist who becomes the point of convergence for the two movements: from the aborted children to members of the Church on earth and vice versa. But Jesus points to verse 8 of Luke, chapter 3, to suggest this conjunction in a more deeply theological way. (December 3rd 1988). The verse speaks of God raising up children to Abraham out of the stones. We have already seen (end of section VI) how Jesus uses this image to show how He can transform the stones of abortion into the glorious martyr triumph of the aborted. The implication therefore is that, in the very act of trying to bring forth fruits worthy of penance in ceremonies of reparation which resemble the water purification practised by John the Baptist, we are to be aware of how the goodness and largesse of God have outdistanced all our efforts in the way He has graced the aborted children.

Patricia's reaction to all this is: "A wonderful backwards and forwards co-operation between God and man - Christ and His Church." It is indeed in perfect harmony with what the Church says about herself as Body-Spouse of Jesus in the teaching of Vatican II.

VIII. The Responsibility of the Church.

Once again the issues to be faced in this section seem to have been pre-empted by what has gone before. Several of the messages, discussed in the two preceding sections, assign to the Church precise tasks. They ask the Magisterium to make a

pronouncement about the martyr status of aborted children. They ask for pastoral care and concern for all the innocent victims, besides aborted children, in whom Divine Innocence is crucified. The message which outlines the different categories of people called to public repentance (see quotation from the message given on December 3rd, 1988) ends with the statement: "Our Lord asked for the whole Church to be officially called to do penance and to hold a Day of Reparation and a Service of Remembrance for the aborted children."

These messages also make it quite clear that a heavy burden of responsibility is involved in these tasks, because of the countless millions of innocent victims who are concerned. Jesus speaks of the blood of these victims crying out for vengeance as surely as did the blood of Abel. If the whole Church does not respond to these warnings with penitence and reparation then grave punishment will follow. They explicitly ask that this burden of responsibility be transferred from the one who is receiving them to the one who is the minister of universal communion in the Church. Thus Jesus says on Good Friday, 1990: "You have been reluctant to give My messages to the Holy Father. This is an unholy fear of men - where is your fear of My condemnation? While you conceal these messages you are held directly responsible; when you have given them to the Holy Father you are no longer responsible; until then you and Father (a priest associated with Patricia in the work) stand condemned for not carrying out My requests." At other times, Jesus and His Mother both reveal their distress at the apparent indifference of those who exercise ministerial oversight in the Church: "The Child Jesus went to Priests and Bishops, many, many of them, desperately tugging at their clothes and pleading with them to help Him. He looked like a small child that wanted to tell his father of some desperate emergency but his father was too busy with other things - so the Holy Child ran desperately from one to another; the Priests looked down at him but were distracted and preoccupied with other matters and did not realise the terrible urgency in the heart of the Infant Jesus. He continued to tug at their clothes - crying out all the time: "Help Me! Help Me!" Poor Jesus! If only the Church could feel the anguish in His heart and that of His sorrowing Mother: I can't understand the complacency! What bitterness flows, like a torrent, from the heart of Jesus and the heart of Mary is a sea of pain." (September 7th 1990).

In order rightly to understand the urgency thus attached by the messages to the responsibility which they lay on the Church in relation to all victims, both children and adults, in whom Divine Innocence is being crucified again, we need to set them within the framework of the Church's self-understanding, briefly outlined in the previous section, and also of her social teaching which flows out of that self-understanding, as an integral part of the mission entrusted by Christ to her to bring every human person into the unity of communion with God. (*Lumen Gentium*, no 1). The Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World categorically condemns abortion in the following terms: "Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes." (no 51, 3). Since the Council, this teaching has been constantly reiterated, both in the declarations of episcopal conferences and in addresses given by the Pope in his travels round the world. There is, therefore, practically no part of the world in which the voice of the Church, in this matter, has not been clearly heard. Just recently the Holy Father, whilst condemning outright the raping of women in Bosnia Herzegovina as a heinous crime, beseeched the women, who had been made pregnant, to respect the defenceless and innocent life they are carrying within them.

Could the Magisterium of the Church uphold the sacredness of the unborn child in more absolute terms than this? Alone among the Churches, the Roman Catholic Church makes the clear statement that the act of abortion is intrinsically immoral, whatever the circumstances, that is, there is never any exception to the duty of obedience to this principle. Orthodox Christians would, in general, hold this position, but their Church authorities are not accustomed to make pronouncements on moral issues. On the issue of abortion, the statements of Protestant Churches are, as on so many other things, a Babel of conflicting opinions. Granted that words are not enough; that, as the example of the women of Bosnia Herzegovina shows so clearly courageous action and pastoral concern and care are required, in both secular society and the Church, on a much wider scale than in regard to this one issue. But are those in the Catholic Church vested with the authority to teach, not making as an explicit defence as they can of the defenceless unborn child?

If only moral truth were at stake, the answer could be, without any hesitation, in the affirmative. But, in asking for a pronouncement on the martyr status of aborted children, the messages are pointing to the crucial importance of the bearing of supernatural truth on the way they have been treated. The moral truth that abortion is intrinsically evil relates, in the first place, to the right of every human being conceived in the womb, to enjoy a normal span of life on this earth. It also contains implicitly a reference to his supernatural destiny, because the sacredness of his life, requiring such absolute respect, originates in the direct creation of his soul by God. Precisely because, from conception onwards, the earth-bound destiny of the human being is indissolubly wedded to his supernatural destiny, the reference to this latter needs to be made very explicit. Such explicit recognition is required from conception onwards, because from then on it influences the way his earthly destiny will or will not be fulfilled and, above all, whether or not it will be lived out as a suitable preparation for the heavenly destiny. It is for this sort of recognition that the messages are asking.

For a similar reason, under the impulse of the Second Vatican Council, the Magisterium, in its social teaching related to the dignity of the human person and the basic human rights to which it gives rise, has moved towards a more prophetic stance. Whilst still making use of philosophical reasoning based on natural law, it tends to integrate it more and more into a framework of reference which relies wholly on the revealed word of God. The very Person of Jesus, in His Paschal Mystery, becomes the only frame of reference by which man can discover who he really is on the purely natural plane. Already the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World* moves along these lines (see nos 37-38). The process is accentuated in the social encyclicals of Paul VI and, even more so, in the writings and addresses of John Paul II. Thus in his very first encyclical John Paul II writes: "...Christ the Redeemer reveals man fully to himself such is, if one can put it that way, the human dimension of the mystery of Redemption. In this dimension, man can recover the greatness, the dignity and the true value of his humanity." And again "The man who wants to go to the bottom of understanding who he is, must, with his anxiety, his uncertainties, and even his weakness and his sin, come close to Christ. He must, so to speak, enter into Christ with his whole being, he must appropriate and assimilate the whole reality of the Incarnation and Redemption, in order to rediscover himself." (*Redemptor Hominis* no 10, §1).

In asking the Magisterium to proclaim that aborted children are martyrs who have truly been washed in the blood of Christ, the messages are simply asking it to help the whole Church to become aware that one of the major evils of our time can only be properly understood and, then overcome, if it is related to what the Holy Father calls the whole

reality of the Incarnation and Redemption. They are asking all of us to lift up our eyes, not just in moral rectitude, but in faith, hope and love, to Jesus hanging on the Cross and shedding His blood, so that we see in abortion, not just a moral evil, but a crucifixion of Divine Innocence in our midst; but also so that we may believe that such crucified love can be triumphant over human wickedness and weakness.

However the question might be asked: "Why have such messages not been communicated directly to those who exercise teaching authority in the Church? It might help to reformulate this question with an example. In the middle of the last century, Mary appeared to a little urchin girl, Bernadette Soubirous, an ignoramus who was not then a saint, but showed marked spiritual improvement from then on, and gave her instructions about the building of a sanctuary which would become a power-house of spiritual renewal for the universal Church. Why did Mary not give these instructions directly to the Church authorities who had to bear the burden of carrying them out? On one occasion when Bernadette was standing before a representative of the civil authorities, he quite understandably said to her: "If the lady really is giving instructions that we are to carry out, then she would not have communicated them to a little fool like you." Bernadette replied: "The lady did not tell me that you would believe what I say; she just told me to tell you."

This reply of Bernadette's, made under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit touches on the crucial issue: the complementarity between sponsal holiness and ministerial authority, as Jesus wishes them to be lived out in His Church. Because this holiness derives directly from His own sponsal self-donation on the Cross, He reserves to Himself, and also to His Blessed Mother, the right to communicate directly to human instruments, however unworthy they may be, that which will contribute to an increase of the Church's sponsal holiness. For such is the purpose of all so-called private revelations: not addition to the public revelation, nor even divinely guaranteed transmission of its content, but the drawing, out of that content, of what would contribute to an increase of holiness. Those who exercise ministerial authority in the Church are asked to give ear in humility, in order to make manifest that their ministry is at the service of the Church's holiness. Conversely however, the chosen instruments of the private communications are always asked to submit the content of these to verification by ministerial authority, because, without such obedience, the ministerial service of holiness would be impossible. "You have not given all the messages to the Church! A full investigation is needed." (Words of Jesus to Patricia on July 9th, 1989). In a fairly long commentary of Numbers 22 to 24, Jesus compares the hesitation of Balaam to carry out the wish of God that Israel should be blessed to the hierarchy of the Church not yet having carried out the blessing of aborted children. Such blessing would in turn bring great blessing on the Church. The triple blessing in verse 10 of Chapter 24 is taken as a reference to a blessing of the children in the three persons of the Trinity. Jesus is in fact the focal point of the whole narrative because He is the morning star of 24, 17. (See II Peter 1,19). He wants to rise in our hearts, in Holy Innocence.

IX. The Novitiate of the Holy Family.

As the introduction to this doctrinal presentation has already indicated, the messages call for the founding of a spiritual family the purpose of which is to promote the living of family life according to the gospel ideal and in conformity with the constant teaching of the Catholic Church. Such a spiritual family, and Catholic families generally, would then constitute an environment in which the victims of sins against

the family, their own sins and the sins of others, could be healed and the way of Divine Innocence could triumph in them.

Mary was most insistent with a particular Catholic priest that this foundation should not be seen as a new spiritual family in the Church. Rather should it be seen as a spiritual novitiate entered into for life within the extension of the Holy Family. The members of the foundation are being asked, as it were, to step into the one Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph and become truly members of it, so that they can be taught by Jesus, and by His Blessed Mother and St. Joseph in union with Him, how to lead Catholic family life according to the gospel. Through Jesus - Eucharist, who nourishes us with His Body and Blood, they can enter into a blood relationship with the Holy Family. "We have a true blood relationship with the Holy Child (Jesus) - we receive His Precious Blood in Communion." (Comment of Patricia in relation to the spirituality of this foundation on March 21st 1992.) This spiritual concept is enshrined in what Mary designates as the Marian priests, brothers, sisters and families of Divine Innocence.

Such a concept of an extension of the very life of the Holy Family in today's world entails the rooting of the foundation in the heart of the Church. If the members can truly consider themselves as such an extension, it is because Mary and Joseph are to the Mystical Body of Christ what they were, through the initiative of God the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit, to the visible, historical life of the Incarnate Son of God in this world. Mary is the mother of the Church and St. Joseph is its protector and guardian. Paul VI officially proclaimed Mary as *Mater Ecclesiae*, Mother of the Church, at the end of the 2nd Vatican Council. Catholic tradition has been much more guarded and discreet about the role of St. Joseph.

Nevertheless the *lex orandi* can once again be our sure guide in this matter. In the Proper of the Mass for the feast of St. Joseph on the 19th of March, the Entrance Antiphon is derived from Luke 12,42; "And the Lord said, who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season." The actual words of the Antiphon are: "The Lord has put his faithful servant in charge of his household." The Greek word rendered by the Authorised Version as steward, and by the English translation of the liturgical text is "*oikonomos*": the one in charge of a household or family. The thinking behind the modification of Jesus' words in the gospel by an Antiphon which constitutes, as it were, a leit-motif for the whole meaning of the feast, is perfectly clear. Jesus promises future responsibility to one who has already exercised faithful stewardship. In other words, because St. Joseph was a wise and faithful steward in relation to the Holy Family, he now has the responsibility of being protector, or guardian, of the whole Church. The application is all the more pointed in the light of Jesus' promise being made in reply to a question of Peter. There is, therefore, in St. Joseph's guardianship of the Church a universality parallel to the ministry of universal communion entrusted to Peter and his successors for the good of the whole Church. As Jesus intimated to a particular Priest, the silence of the New Testament about St. Joseph, after the episode of the finding of Jesus in the Temple, turns out to be a "thundering silence". The Tradition of the Church has been able to draw out some of the richness of its implications. (We shall come back to these later on.) What is made clear is the extent to which a project of founding a spiritual family which purports to be a participation in the very life of the Holy Family is rooted in the ongoing life of the Church. For, whether one enters into visible membership of this foundation or not, one is already a

member of the extended family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, simply by virtue of baptism into the Body-Spouse of Jesus which is the Church.

Many of the spiritual and pastoral consequences of this will only reveal their full potential as the foundation develops. But something must be said, within the framework of this doctrinal exposition, about the way they relate to the understanding which the Church has of herself and of her relationship to the world as it is developed in the teaching of Vatican II.

A first consequence is that Patricia approaches this call to found from the standpoint of ordinary family life lived out both in society and in the bosom of the Church and subject in consequence to many of the difficulties and tensions, which the wrongs and imbalances of society introduce willy nilly into Catholic family life in the Church. Patricia: "Father" (a priest who has helped her) "says I work too much from the Natural Family Situation" Jesus: "You have to work from what you know. The Natural and Divine Law work together. You have experienced the good and evil that the natural family experiences; you have learnt from that experience. The supernatural environment of the Holy Family is teaching you how heaven wishes families to live." (March 16th, 1992) Or again: "But where do we start in this wicked world and evil society? We start with ourselves and we start where Jesus started, with His Heavenly Father, by carrying out the Will of God. We then go to Mary the Virgin Mother of God and ask her permission to be born of her spiritual Motherhood, the Maternal Church, by keeping the Church's teaching and following the Commandments." (Vision concerning the striving to be a full member of the Holy Family - March 16th. 1992)

Another consequence flows immediately out of this one the worst forms of human brokenness, of brokenness of family life of twisted relationships between men and women, and between parents and their children, can be brought to wounded Divine Innocence and the sufferers there healed of their own wounds so that Divine Innocence can be triumphant "Vision: The sanctification of family life and all family situations. Gathering up the most helpless members of society, the crucified victims of sin - their own sins, the sins of others, sins of circumstances and of history; healing the wounds caused by sin and the wounds caused by the person's reactions to those sins (the sins of the parents are visited on the children to the third and fourth generation). Natural and Supernatural cause and effect of living in the wholesome and holy environment of the Holy Family in innocence and holiness. To have Christ as the centre of our lives will bring us this healing and redeeming touch," (March 16th). Or again : "The Vision is a holy and wholesome environment in which very wounded souls can regain their natural innocence and can grow and develop their supernatural innocence within the teachings of the Church; follow the Gospel, keep the Commandments - under the care of the Holy Family itself (March 16th, 1992.)

The distinction between the natural and the supernatural, alluded to in the two previous quotations, is of crucial importance. There can be no question of offering, to those who suffer most from the brokenness of family life, only the moral injunctions of the Church, based on natural law and human dignity, on the grounds that it is not possible to go further with people so far from the practice of the gospel ideal embodied in the life of the Holy Family at Nazareth. On the contrary, only the deepest spiritual nourishment, stemming from the constant contemplation of that ideal and already being lived out, however imperfectly, by people with whom the broken ones can be put into direct contact, is sufficient to bring about their healing. This and this alone, will lift them above themselves in faith, hope and love, so that Crucified Divine Innocence

can be triumphant in them. All the resources of the Body-Spouse of Jesus called to perfect spousal union with Him must be mobilised in the service of those who appear to be the least of the little ones.

Hence the project to structure the foundation in such a way that representatives of all three states of life in the Church: the lay state, married, or unmarried, consecrated religious life and celibate ministerial priesthood, can pray, work and live in close collaboration with each other. Each of these three states, even the lay unmarried state through the sacrament of baptism, is a way of sharing in the Church's spousal relationship of holiness with Jesus. "The foundation of a new community was requested which included Priests, Religious, and laity as one family, working in holy co-operation with each other." (The Longer Presentation of the Main Points of the Messages). Or again: "Founding of a Religious Order living the ordered life of the Holy Family encompassing Priests Religious and Laity in one religious family. Laity is not to be considered as third order. Priest and Male House, Motherly and Female House. Double Foundation Houses with shared chapel" (Shorter Presentation of Main Points of the Messages).

There is a striking convergence between this will to involve all three states of life in the Church in close collaboration with each other and the direction in which the teaching Church has been moving at the universal level, since the synod commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. That Synod emphasised ecclesial communion as central to the teaching of the Council in its entirety and then went on to programme three Synods which would deal successively with each of the three states, or vocations in the Church, which are together constitutive of that ecclesial communion. Two of these synods, the first on the laity, with the subsequent promulgation by John Paul 2nd of *Christifideles Laici* and the second on formation for the priesthood, with again the encyclical *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, as a follow up, have already taken place. The third on the religious life is to take place in 1994. The lineaments or preparatory working guidelines have already been communicated to all the bishops of the world.

Those who, whilst belonging to, or seeking to belong to, one of those three states of life in the Church, enter into this spiritual family of the Holy Family, undergo the Novitiate of the Holy Family. It is Mary and St. Joseph in person who teach them how to live out true motherhood and fatherhood and the spiritual complementarity between them, having themselves been schooled in these roles by the very Person of the Lord Jesus who chose in humility to be submitted to them. "Our Lady and St. Joseph were not a family until Jesus arrived to complete them individually as a family." (March 16th). A full documentation from the messages and from those involved of what this novitiate implies is beyond the scope of this presentation. One or two examples will suffice.

On the basis of her own experience Patricia puts her finger on what is implied for the mother of a family in this formation in true Catholic motherhood modelled on Mary. "It is natural for a mother when she is to give birth to a child to seek out a place of permanence and safety Our Lady was denied this from the natural point of view this would be the cause of psychological stress ... Our Lady's trust in God was supernatural and therefore calmed her natural instincts and gave her a supernatural trust in God. We are all called to this supernatural trust in God." (8th December, 1991). Or again: "It is not natural for a mother to accept her child being scourged, crowned with thorns, insulted, nailed to a cross and dying in agony, for the sins of the people,

when he himself is completely innocent and good. All her natural instincts would cry out against such a crime. Our Blessed Lady had been well trained in her supernatural role as Mother of Holiness and Innocence. She was fully human and felt the anguish and pain a mother would feel, but because her Motherhood was guided by supernatural grace and principles she was able to accept and even co-operate with the Will of God for the redemption of the world.....We as women are also needed by Christ to carry out our supernatural role as mothers of holiness and innocence, married or single, the role of mothering Christ in the world and of co-operating in helping those around us to offer themselves as victims of love to the Father in union with Christ on the Cross - for the salvation of the world. This role of women in their supernatural motherhood is vital to the Church and to the world." (ibid)

In this second quotation we see how motherhood rightly lived out in the family moves out to society at large. Or rather women, whether married or single, have, by vocation, this role of exercising a wider motherhood in society. "We take our example from this family (the Holy Family) for all family situations - the natural family, community family, family of the Parish, the diocese, school, the place of work, the family of Nations, the family of mankind. All our families should be Christ-centred." (March 16th, 1992).

There is a striking parallel between these wider implications of the Novitiate of the family and the way the whole corpus of the social teaching of the Church is structured and built up. It always begins with the family as the basic unit of social life in society, where alone can be acquired those virtues, which are necessary for men to live in harmony with one another at every level, social, cultural, political and international, of the interrelationships of the whole family of mankind.

What of the celibate ministerial priest? In his sacramental ministry, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist, he is the representative of the very Person of Jesus. In this capacity he must be a sacramental instrument of the binding together of all the members of the spiritual family of the Holy Family. But, in the person of St. Joseph, he will be able to contemplate how his celibate solitude with Jesus enables him better to behave as a true father to those entrusted to his pastoral care. He must model the necessary contemplative dimension of his priestly life on the example of St. Joseph who "learnt more from gazing at the Holy Child who is pure truth, pure love, purity and humility than in any other way." (Words of St. Joseph). The most clear statement of what masculine celibacy entails is made by St. John the Baptist in the Gospel of St. John. To those who ask him whether he is not upset because his disciples are leaving him to go to Jesus he replies. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase and I must decrease". (John 3, 29-30). Like John the Baptist, the priest must be self-effacing in the very act of establishing close pastoral relationships with others. It is his celibate solitude with Jesus which will enable him to do this, because he will rejoice to see the pastoral relationships become a vehicle of the union of Jesus with His loved ones. He will thus in his solitude become a witness to the transcendent fatherhood of God who has made possible this fruitfulness of the pastoral relationships in the love of Jesus.

Is there any need to insist on how the Gospels portray St. Joseph as the supreme example of this chaste fatherhood, under the transcendent fatherhood of God? St. Joseph accepted self-effacement in order that the Child Jesus should be fully formed in the womb of Mary (Matt.1, 19-21). Yet he fully accepts the guardianship of

fatherhood in the naming of the Child (1,25). He effaces himself again in order that the Sonship of Jesus in relation to His Heavenly Father might be made fully manifest (Lk 2, 49-50). Yet he accepts that Jesus be submitted to him as a child to his father (2,51). Finally he disappears entirely from the scene in order that the sponsal relationship between Jesus and His Church might come into being, through Mary. Yet now the Church recognises him as her protector and guardian: "The Lord has put his faithful servant in charge of His household" (Entrance Antiphon for the feast of St. Joseph).

Because Jesus was formed by the Holy Spirit in the womb and heart of Mary, He is at the heart and centre of the Holy Family. Because Jesus-Eucharist is formed by the Holy Spirit in the womb and heart of the Church, He is at the heart and centre of the spiritual family of the Novitiate of the Holy Family. Hence the emphasis, everywhere laid in the messages, both on the celebration of Mass and on the adoration of Jesus-Eucharist. The shorter summary of the main points of the messages laconically states: "Vocation: Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the care of priests and Families." But everything is implicitly said in the order of priorities here established. Included in these priorities is the stark reality that the destruction of family life is the biggest single cause of the decline in vocations to the priesthood. It is only in proper Christian nurture, as made possible by stable family life, that this tendency towards decline will be reversed. Cardinal Lustiger, speaking in France in defence of priestly celibacy, pointed out that the Holy Spirit is no less generous now in giving the charism of celibacy than he was in the 19th century when France was able to send both male and female celibate missionaries all over the world. But in the present generation the charism of celibacy is often stifled in the hearts of boys and girls, through want of proper nurture by Catholic motherhood and fatherhood.

Appendix A.

Two further Illustrations from Saint Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church:

(1) The Infant Christ-Child and the Cross.

"She saw in him the cross of desire and the cross of the body, and she said to him: My sweet Lord, what was your greatest suffering: the suffering of the body or the suffering of desire? And Jesus answered her tenderly: My daughter, have no doubt, I can assure you that there is absolutely no comparison between something finite and something infinite. Think that the suffering of my body was finite, but that my desire was not so, and that I always bore the cross of holy desire. Do you not remember, my daughter, that I once showed you my birth, and that you saw me newly born with the Cross on my neck. This was to teach you that I, the Incarnate Word, from the moment of my conception in the womb of Mary, was attached to the cross of the desire that was mine to obey my Father, and to accomplish his will in man, by giving grace back to man and making him reach the end for which he has been created." (Letter to an important prelate).

(2) The Baptism of Blood for those who cannot receive a Baptism of Water.

"You know that there came out blood and water; the water was for the holy baptism which Christians receive and which gives life and the form of grace. Eternal Goodness, by the merits of the blood of the Lamb, has also provided for the needs of our ignorance and wretchedness. And for those who are unable to receive the baptism of

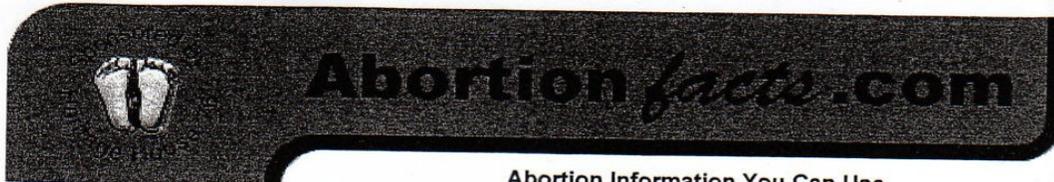
water, there is the baptism of blood and of fire, because their blood shed for God becomes a baptism, as it was for the Holy Innocents. This efficacy comes from the blood of the Son of God; the blood of the martyrs only has value through his blood. But we, poor miserable Christians, who have received grace, why do our hearts, so cold and so full of self-love, not apply themselves to contemplating this fire of ineffable love and this infinite Providence? By sin we had lost the grace and purity received in holy baptism, the excellence of which is so great that one can only receive it once; and God has established a baptism of blood and of fire that we are constantly able to receive." (Letter to the Religious of Cervaia).

Appendix B.

Author's note:

Many of the messages presented in the preceding doctrinal synthesis deal with biblical themes which interweave with one another in a way which is very illuminating. In the choice of texts, which he has made the author of this doctrinal synthesis has done his best to follow in the direction of this illumination. He entrusted the whole process of discerning which texts to choose to the guidance of Mary. If there is oversight or imbalance in his choice, he wishes to beg her forgiveness. To his knowledge there is no theological statement in this presentation contrary to the deposit of faith, as contained in Scripture and Tradition of which the authentic interpretation "has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone" (*Dei Verbum*, no 11, §1). If those with the authority to speak in the name of this teaching office were to think otherwise, he would immediately submit his judgement to theirs.

Appendix III. ABORTION: FACTS AND STATISTICS.



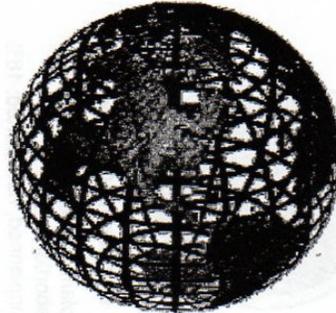
Abortion Information You Can Use

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[I am Pro-Life](#)
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World Abortion Statistics

54 countries allow abortion, which is about 61 percent of the world population. 97 countries, about 39 percent of the population, have abortion laws that make it illegal according to the pro-abortion Center for Reproductive Law and Policy in New York.

- The Alan Guttmacher Institute reports approximately **22** million legal abortions were reported in 1987.
- It is estimated that between four and nine million were not reported totaling of **26-31** million legal abortions in 1987 alone.
- There were a total of **10-22** million "clandestine" abortions, bringing the total worldwide figure to **36** and **53** million abortions.

France - Legalized
Britain - Legalized
Switzerland - Legalized
Denmark - legalized
Hungary - Legalized
Romania - Legalized
Poland - Illegal
Italy - Legalized
Colombia - Illegal
Peru - Illegal
Mexico - Illegal
Russia - Legalized
United States - Legalized
China - Legalized
Australia - Legalized
Brazil - Illegal

Sources: International Family Planning Perspectives, 16:59, June 1990;
USA Today, 8/8/96.

Last Updated: 03/15/03

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Magnus Hirschfeld Archive for Sexology

World-wide Statistics

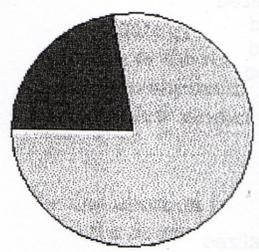


Course 2
 Abortion
 Unwanted Pregnancies
 A Moral Dilemma
 Differing Views
 A Medical Issue
 A Legal Issue
 World-wide Statistics
 Historical Notes
 Abortion Methods

Abortion

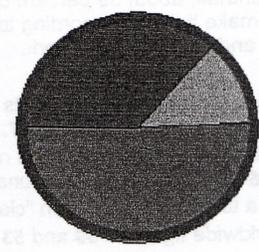
World-wide Statistics

Planned and unplanned pregnancies including abortions



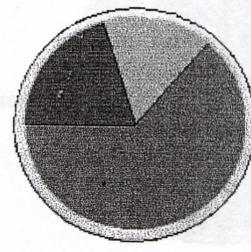
Abortions world-wide
 developed countries: 22%
 developing countries: 78%

Sources: Center for Bioethical Reform,
 Alan Guttmacher Institute



Developed Countries
 planned pregnancies: 51%
 abortions: 36%
 unplanned, not aborted: 13%

Total number of pregnancies per year: 28 million



Developing Countries
 planned pregnancies: 64%
 abortions: 20%
 unplanned, not aborted: 16%

Total number of pregnancies per year: 182 million

Nearly 1.5 billion women in the world are of childbearing age, i.e. between 15 and 45 years old. During most of these years they have sexual intercourse but do not want to become pregnant, either because "the time is not right" for them or because they do not want more children than they already have. World-wide, in spite of the more frequent use of contraception, women are still undergoing a great number of abortions. Indeed, each year, there are about 26 million legal and an estimated 20 million illegal abortions in the world. In other words: World-wide, there are ca. 126.000 abortions every day. Most abortions by far occur in the developing countries. The present, often acrimonious discussion about the morality and legality of abortion must be seen before the background of these sobering facts.

Baby Parts for Sale A batch of eyes by UPS - 30 livers by FedEx

By J. C. Willke, MD

After fighting abortion for 30 years I thought I had seen and heard it all, but not so. Here is a new development, a coordinated high-tech industry functioning for the specific purpose of obtaining and selling high-quality fetal organs for research.

Partial-Birth abortions seemed to be so horrible that most of us wondered how such procedures could be defended. Many of us chalked it up to the fact that the pro-abortion advocates and the abortion industry didn't want to give one inch for fear that their whole house of cards will fold. I, among others, felt that their resistance to forbidding this gruesome procedure was a fear of a domino effect. If we stopped this one, then we'd stop the next and the next and the next and they didn't want it to start. But now we have evidence of a very clear additional reason why they want these late-term abortions to continue. The reason is that this is the one method that gives them intact fetal bodies from which they can obtain organs for research.

The other method of late-term abortion, D&E (Dilatation and Evacuation), involves reaching up into the uterus and dismembering the live baby. This delivers pieces of macerated organs that are usually unsuitable for fetal research, transplantation etc. This may be the main reason for their vehement defense of the practice of Partial-Birth abortion.

The story was broken recently by Life Dynamics under the guidance of its director, Mark Crutcher. A lady came to him with a story, which he has verified. The name of the informant cannot be revealed, as she is still involved in the work that she has exposed. Her story is dramatically recorded in a video just released by Life Dynamics. In it, this woman under the pseudonym, Kelly, tells her story. Her back is to the camera and her voice is electronically altered to prevent her identification. She worked for "an outside source, hired with a team to go in [to late term abortion clinics] to dissect and procure fetal tissue for high-quality sales." Read on as Kelly describes her macabre profession. "What we did was to have a contract with an abortion clinic that would allow us to go there on certain days. We would get a generated list each day to tell us what tissue researchers, pharmaceutical companies and universities were looking for. Then we would examine the patient charts. We would screen out the ones we didn't want.

We did not use specimens that had STDs [sexually transmitted diseases] or fetal abnormalities. We only wanted the most perfect specimens that we could give to the researchers." And the age of these babies? The victims were up to and over 30-weeks gestation. "We were looking for eyes, livers, brains, thymuses [lymphoid tissue], cardiac blood, cord blood, blood from the liver, even blood from the limbs."

Only an estimated 2% of the late-term aborted babies had abnormalities. "The rest were very healthy. 95% of the time, she was just there to get rid of the baby." How many of the late-term - the ones around 30 weeks - would you see? "Probably 30 or 40 babies a week."

Kelly stated, "We would sell the tissue to private contractors. They in turn would sell to other universities and researchers. There was a high demand every week to buy such fetal tissues. It was shipped by UPS, FedEx, Airborne and sometimes by special couriers. Sometimes we would take the specimen in a box to the airport and put it on as regular cargo, to be picked up at the destination." And did these shipping companies know they were transporting baby parts? "No. All they knew was that it was just human cells. But it could be a completely intact fetus. It might be a batch of eyes, or 30 or 40 livers going out that day, or thymuses

And the leftover parts? “We would usually put this down the garbage disposal along with the placenta and the leftover blood material. If it was too large to go down the drain, they had a special freezer and when they accumulated 60 or 70 fetuses in one box, it would be picked up for incineration.”

And then the obvious question. Kelly is still working for this company, so why did she come and tell this story to a pro-life group? One day when she was working, “A set of twins at 24 weeks gestation was brought to us in a pan. They were both alive. The doctor came back and said, ‘Got you some good specimens, twins.’ I looked at him and said, ‘There’s something wrong here. They are moving. I don’t do this. This is not in my contract.’ I told him I would not be part of taking their lives. So he took a bottle of sterile water and poured it in the pan until the fluid came up over their mouths and noses, letting them drown. I left the room because I could not watch this.” But she did go back and dissect them after they were dead. She said, “That’s when I decided it was wrong. I did not want to be there when that happened.” And then it happened again and again. “At 16 weeks, all the way up to sometimes even 30 weeks, and we had live births come back to us.” And then? “Then the doctor would either break the neck or take a pair of tongs and beat the fetus until it was dead.”

Did the abortionist ever alter the procedures to get you the type of specimens you needed that day? Her answer was “Yes, before the procedures they would want to see the list of what we wanted to procure. The [abortionist] would get us the most complete, intact specimens that he could. They would be delivered to us completely intact. Sometimes the fetus appeared to be dead, but when we opened up the chest cavity, the heart was still beating.” She was asked if the type of abortion procedure was intentionally altered to deliver to you an intact specimen, even if that meant giving you a live baby? Her answer was, “Yes, that was so we could sell better tissue, so that our company would make more money. At the end of the year, they would give the clinic back more money because we got good specimens.”

The Partial-Birth abortion procedure involves inserting seaweed laminaria into the cervix. This swells up, dilating the cervix. In 24 hours, new laminaria are inserted. This produces more swelling and dilatation so that by the third day the baby can be extracted. During the dilatation procedure she is sent to a nearby motel. Sometimes the laminaria would fall out and she would go into labor and deliver the baby. And then? “They would call the nurse, and the nurse would call the doctor who would go to the motel room and pick up the woman and the fetus. That’s when they would call us and say, ‘Okay, we’ve got a couple of specimens here,’ or ‘We’ve got one specimen.’ We would go [to the clinic] and the specimen [the baby] would be in a bucket, sometimes alive. When we opened the chest cavity the heart would still be beating. Sometimes we could see movement in the bucket. These babies had to come out alive. There’s no way for them to be coming out dead. They were all alive. How they killed them is anyone’s guess. My guess is that they had to kill them in

the bucket or put them in a corner and let them die slowly.” And that was because the abortionist had seen how strongly you reacted to seeing them killed in front of you? “That’s correct. And he did not want to repeat those instances but they kept happening anyway, and that’s how I came to call you guys [Life Dynamics].”

Finally, Kelly related how sometimes a woman, halfway through the dilatation procedure, would change her mind and say she did not want the abortion. In such a case they would tell her that it’s too late now. “You’re going to have the abortion.” Kelly said, “All of the staff would gather around pressuring her to have the abortion. On the second day, they’re given an IV sedation, which kind of puts them into what I call a Nyquil nap. They’re just basically drowsy, not thinking for themselves and that’s basically how they are coerced into continuing the procedure.”

Finally, in the interview, she notes that many of the employees of the clinics were lesbians. When the mother was unconscious these women would discuss her genitalia with degrading remarks and on occasion even take the phone number off of her chart. Then they would “call her weeks down the road and ask her out for a date. It was not uncommon for women or men at the clinic to hit on these women for dates.”

Now We Know Why

Now we know one of the major reasons why the abortion industry is fighting so intensely to prevent a ban on Partial-Birth abortion from being enacted. It's more than not giving any ground on abortion for any reason. It's also because selling fetal parts is a very lucrative part of the abortion business. These mothers pay large sums of money for late-term abortions and the abortionists in turn are given big money for these intact organs. The model specimens have to be: the bigger - the better; the older - the better; the more alive - the better.

The above dialogue is from a video that has been produced by Life Dynamics. If any of our readers would like a free copy of this interview, while quantities last, feel free to contact us and we will send you a copy. Send your request to: Life Issues Institute, 1721 W. Galbraith Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45239. Phone (513) 729-3600. Fax (513) 729-3636. E-mail lifeissues@aol.com

Is Abortion Safe? ***Physical Complications****

Despite the use of local anesthesia, a full 97% of women having abortions reported experiencing pain during the procedure, [81] which more than a third described as "intense," [82] "severe" or "very severe." [83] Compared to other pains, researchers have rated the pain from abortion as more painful than a bone fracture, about the same as cancer pain, though not as painful as an amputation. [84]

Studies also reveal that younger women tend to find abortion more painful than do older adults, [85] and that patients typically found abortion more painful than their doctors or counselors expected. [86] The use of more powerful general anesthetics can reduce the pain, but significantly increases the risk of cervical injury or uterine perforation. [87]

Complications such as these are common, as are bleeding, hemorrhage,[88] laceration of the cervix, [89] menstrual disturbance, [90] inflammation of the reproductive organs, [91] bladder or bowel perforation, [92] and serious infection. [93]

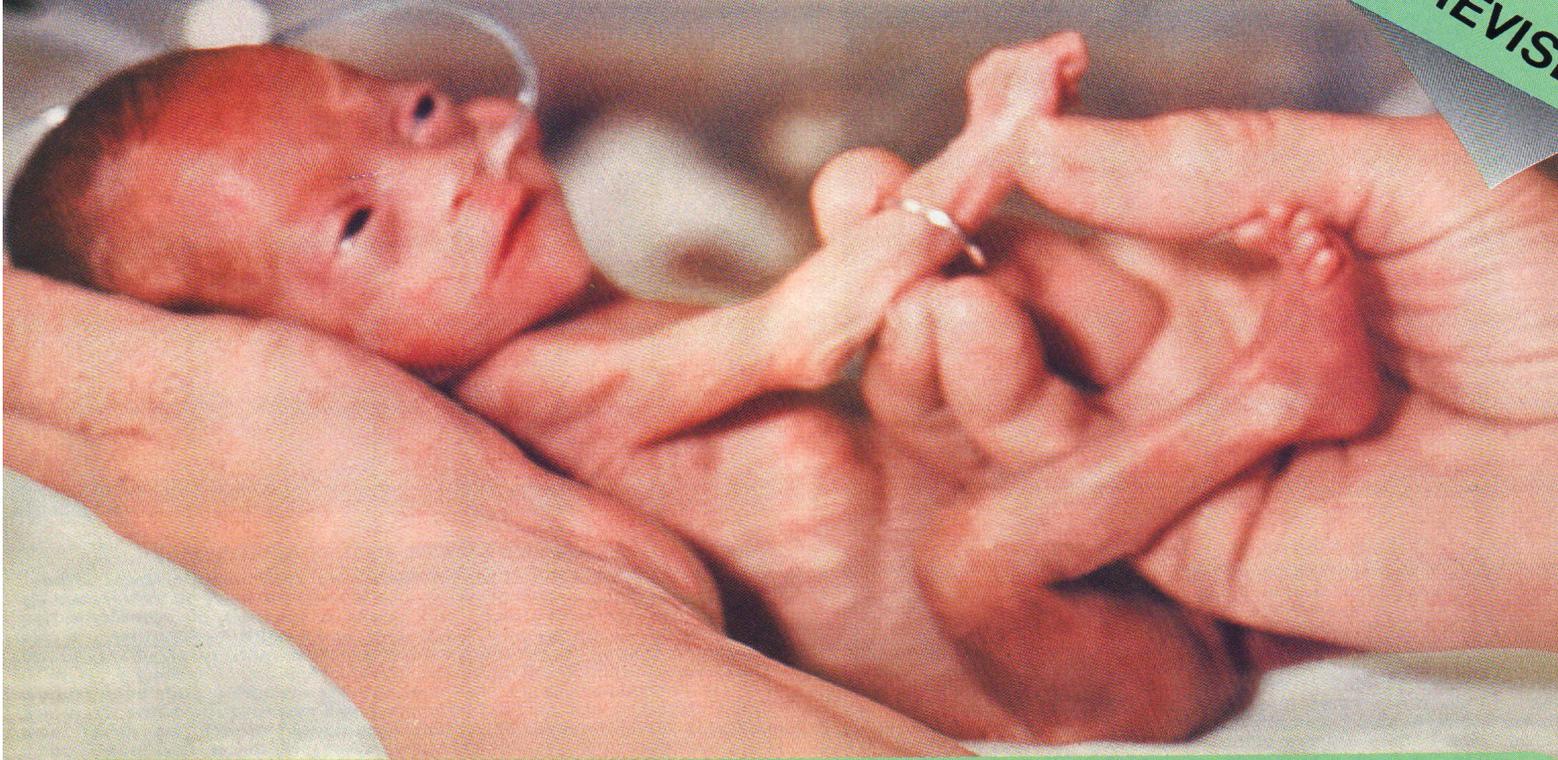
Even more harmful long term physical complications from abortion may surface later. For example, overzealous curettage can damage the lining of the uterus and lead to permanent infertility. [94] Overall, women who have abortions face an increased risk of ectopic (tubal) pregnancy [95] and a more than doubled risk of future sterility. [96] Perhaps most important of all, the risk of these sorts of complications, along with risks of future miscarriage, increase with each subsequent abortion. [97]

The particular type and severity of complications depend a great deal on the experience of the abortionist and the particular abortion method used. Given that most abortions are performed at abortion clinics rather than by a woman's regular ob-gyn, [98] the doctor performing the abortion is likely to be a stranger of whose skill and experience a woman knows very little. [99] Such things as an inadequate gynecologic examination prior to the operation, the carelessness of the abortionist, or the retention of fetal and placental tissue can all bring on complications. These kinds of complications can usually be treated and generally subside (though not always), [100] but few women ever return to the clinics for crucial post-operative examinations. [101]

There is strong evidence that abortion increases the risk of breast cancer. A study of more than 1,800 women appearing in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* in 1994 found that overall, women having abortions increased their risk of getting breast cancer before age 45 by 50%. For women under 18 with no previous pregnancies, having an abortion after the 8th week increased the risk of breast cancer 800%. Women with a family history of breast cancer fared even worse. All 12 women participating in the study who had abortions before 18 and had a family history of breast cancer themselves got cancer before age 45. [102]

Of course, death of the mother is the most serious of all complications. Over 200 women have died from legal abortions since 1973. [103] The risk of death increases according to the duration of pregnancy [104] and the complexity of the abortion technique employed. [105]

REVISI



LIFE

**21 Week Baby
Born Alive**
(photo, 3 weeks later)

or DEATH

**21 Week Baby
Killed by Abortion**





Baby Born at 4-1/2 Months

Baby Kenya King, born in Orlando, Florida, 21 weeks (4-1/2 months) from the first day of her mother's last menstrual period. Weighing 18 oz. (510 gm) she dropped to 13 oz. She is shown @ 5 lbs. with her mother. (Miami Herald, Pam Smith photo)

Some states use "viability" or ability to survive outside the womb as a measurement of the humanity of the unborn. Thirty years ago, however, "viability" was about 30 weeks. Now it is as early as 20 weeks. In 20 more years it may be at 10 or 12 weeks. What is changing is the increasing sophistication of our external life support systems. The babies are the same. Therefore, "viability" cannot be used to judge the baby's humanity. Rather it measures the skill and equipment of the doctors, nurses, and hospital in which the baby is born.



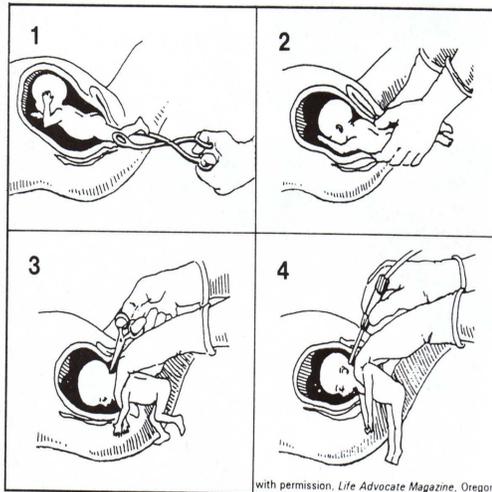
Eleven to Twelve Weeks (3 Months)

At this stage all organ systems are functional. He breathes, swallows, digests, and urinates. He is very sensitive to pain, recoiling from pin-prick and noise, and seeks a position of comfort when disturbed. Soon he will sleep and wake with his mother. If his amniotic fluid is sweetened, he will swallow more often, if it is made sour he will quit swallowing.

He can be taught by sound signals to anticipate and recoil from a pain stimulus, but no two little ones will respond the same, they are already individuals. At this stage Arnold Gesel has said, "The organization of his psychosomatic self is well underway."

After this time nothing new will develop or function, only further growth and maturation.

Note, he is sucking his thumb. Ultrasound movies have shown thumb sucking at eight weeks.



Partial Birth (Brain Suction) Abortion

After 3 days of dilating the cervix, the abortionist reaches up the birth canal, grasps a leg and pulls it down and out, then the other leg, body, shoulder and arms. At this point with a gentle pull, he could deliver the final 3 or 4 inches (the head) and send the baby to the nursery. Rather, he inserts scissors into the base of the baby's skull, separates the blades, and inserts a suction tube into the skull and sucks out the brains. This kills the baby who is then removed.



D & E Abortion at 4 Months

Performed between 12 and 20 weeks, this method utilizes a sharp toothed, pliers-like instrument. The abortionist grasps a part of the body of the baby and tears it away. This dismemberment of the living baby continues, without any fetal anesthetic, until all parts, plus the deeply rooted afterbirth, are removed. Bleeding is profuse.

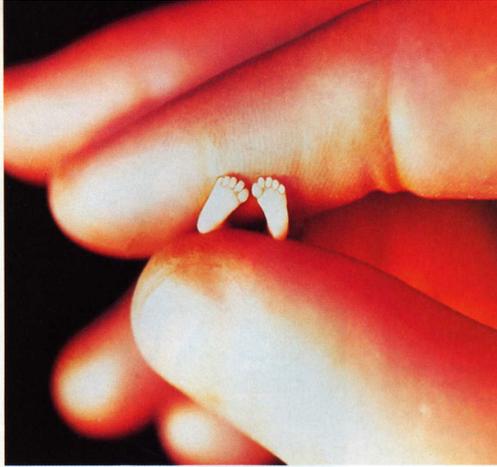
Salt Poisoning

After 16 weeks, a long needle is inserted through the mother's abdomen into the baby's sac and a solution of concentrated salt is injected. The baby breathes in and swallows the salt and is poisoned by it. It takes over an hour to slowly kill the baby. The mother will go into labor about 24 hours later and deliver the "Product of Pregnancy."

By Dr. & Mrs. J. C. Wilke

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Tiny Human Feet at 10 Weeks

These perfectly formed feet demonstrate that the baby's tiny body is completely formed at this time.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| at six weeks | -- "quickening" occurs--that is movement begins.
-- human brain activity can be recorded on the electroencephalogram. |
| at 18 days at conception | -- the human heart begins to beat.
-- human life begins. At that moment a new being exists--totally different from the body of either the mother or father (different genetic makeup)
-- human (46 chromosomes)
-- alive (capable of replacing his own dying cells)
-- and needing only food and time to grow into an adult human. |



Human Life at Eight Weeks (2 Months)

At this stage:

- he (or she) will grab an instrument placed in his palm and hold on
- an electrocardiogram can be done
- he "swims freely in the amniotic fluid with a natural swimmer's stroke"
- with instruments you can hear his heartbeat.



Suction Abortion at 10 Weeks

Suction abortion is performed between six and 12 weeks. This method involves the insertion of a tube through the cervix (mouth of the womb). Connected to a powerful suction, this tears apart the body of the developing baby and sucks it out. Then, either with this tube or with a curette, (a loop shaped steel knife), the abortionist cuts and slices the deeply rooted placenta, the afterbirth, from the inner wall of the womb. Up to 95% of abortions are done in this way. Sometimes body parts are easily identified.

Prostaglandin Abortion

This drug causes the woman to go into labor at any stage of pregnancy. It is used in middle and late pregnancy to induce abortion. It's major "complication" is "live birth." It also can cause serious maternal injury.

Recently it has been used with RU-486 to increase its "effectiveness."



Suction Abortion at 8 Weeks

RU-486

This is an abortion pill, used along with a prostaglandin drug. It is "effective" in 90-95% of the time when used between one and three weeks after she has missed her first period. It functions by starving the tiny embryo by depriving him or her of a vital nutrient hormone, progesterone.

It kills a developing baby after his or her heart has begun to beat.

All but one (recent) colored photo in this brochure were submitted during scientific testimony before the Judiciary Sub-committee of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1976 and before the Judiciary Sub-committee of the U.S. Senate in 1981 and in 1982. They were not challenged and were published by both House and Senate in the official proceedings.



Nurse with premature baby born at 6 months.

Q. What are we to think of a woman who aborts her child?

A. Let's be very clear. We understand the agony of her decision. We want to stand with her, not against her. We want to help her explore other loving alternatives like adoption. We want to help her. Why can't we love them both?

Q. But adopted children have serious problems.

A. Not so at all. Compared, across the board, to children born into families, adopted children are more stable, more healthy, more educated and lead more stable lives as adults, than biological children—they are, that is, if placed in the adoptive home as young infants. When children are adopted who have lived in a succession of foster homes, there are problems at times. These problems are not from adoption however. Rather they bring the problems with them and sometimes the adoptive parents are unable to cope with them.

Q. But isn't it cruel to allow a handicapped child to be born—to a miserable life?

A. The assumption that handicapped people enjoy life less than "normal" ones has been shown to be false. A well-documented investigation has shown that there is no difference between handicapped and normal persons in their degree of life satisfaction, and outlook of what lies immediately ahead and vulnerability to frustration. "Though it may be both common and fashionable to believe that the malformed enjoys life less than normal, this appears to lack both empirical and theoretical support."

Paul Cameron & D. Van Hoeck, Am. Psychologic Assn. Meeting, 1971

Q. What about a woman who's been raped?

A. Pregnancy from forcible rape is extremely rare. (See Wilke, Abortion: Questions and Answers). The victim must be supported, loved and helped, but we should never kill an innocent baby for the crime of his father.

Q. But legal abortion is better than dangerous back-alley abortions and their toll of women dying, isn't it?

A. Most such stories are false. In 1972, the year before the U.S. Supreme Court decision on abortion, only 39 women died in all 50 states from illegal abortions. (25 more died in 1972 from legal abortions). These were 39 tragedies, but compared to over 5,000,000 pregnancies that year this is a minuscule number. Certainly it shows that claims of 5-10,000 deaths and one million illegal abortions are totally ridiculous.

Either there were not many illegal abortions or all illegal abortions were amazingly safe.

Q. What about her right to choose?

A. The first question to ask about any action that is morally questionable is not "who can choose to do it?" but "is the action right or wrong in the first place?" Consider other examples such as rape, stealing, child abuse. Do we first ask "who decides?" who can choose to do these things? Not! We first ask "are these actions right or wrong?"

Just so with abortion. The first question must be "is abortion right or wrong?" The "choice and who decides?" question follows. It is never the first question.

Another answer to "choice" is, choice to do what? Clearly it is a choice to kill.

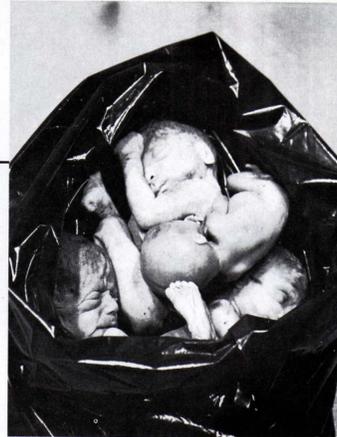
LIFE OF DEATH

Q. Isn't abortion another means of contraception?

A. No. Do not confuse abortion with contraception. Contraception prevents new life from beginning. Abortion kills the new life that has already begun.

Q. What is an abortifacient then?

A. Some of today's so-called "contraceptives" are really abortive at times. This is when ovulation is not suppressed, fertilization does occur, but the one-week-old living human embryo is unable to implant into the wall of her womb. If the "contraceptive" drug or device prevents implantation then it is really an abortifacient.



Human Garbage--"These dead babies had reached fetal ages of 18 to 24 weeks before being killed by abortion. This is the result of one morning's work at a Canadian teaching hospital."

Q. I've heard abortion compared to slavery.

A. The analogy is accurate. The Dred Scott Decision in 1857 ruled that black people were not "persons" in the eyes of the Constitution. Slaves could be bought, sold, used or even killed as property of the owner. That decision was overturned by the 14th Amendment. Now the court has ruled that unborn people are not "persons" in the eyes of the Constitution. They can be killed at the request of their owners (mothers). This dreadful decision can only be reversed by the court itself or overturned by another constitutional amendment.

Q. Why bring unwanted babies into the world?

A. An unwanted pregnancy in the early months does not necessarily mean an unwanted baby after delivery. Dr. Edward Lenoski (U. of S. Cal.) has conclusively shown that 90% of battered children were planned pregnancies.

Since when does someone's life depend upon someone else wanting them. That is an incredibly evil ethic.

Q. Abortion is only a religious question, isn't it?

A. No. Theology certainly concerns itself with respect for human life. It must turn to science, however, to tell it when life begins. The question of abortion is a basic human question that concerns the entire civilized society in which we live. It is not just a Catholic, or Protestant, or Jewish issue. It is a civil rights question, a human right's question, a question of who lives and who can be killed.

Q. A civil rights question? How so?

A. 1) The first question to be asked is: What is this inside of her womb? Is it a human life? The answer is found in natural science, medicine and biology. At the first cell stage, fertilization, this being is alive, not dead. Human?, yes, not another species. Sexed?, yes, male or female from fertilization. Complete?, yes, nothing has been added to the single cell, whom each of us once was, nothing except nutrition and oxygen.

Science has long since shown conclusively that this is a human life from the beginning.

2) The second question is: Should there be equal protection by law for all living humans, or should the law discriminate, fatally against an entire class of living humans as with abortion, which discriminates on the basis of age (too young) and place-of-residence (living in the womb).

So, abortion is a violation of human rights, of civil rights.

Q. What about emotional after effects?

A. Some women have problems soon after the abortion. The big problem, however, is usually many years later. This is now called "Post Abortion Syndrome." By virtue of suppression and denial, such women repress any negative feelings for, on average, at least five years. Then, a variety of symptoms emerge, many of which can be very upsetting and even disabling. It is similar to the post-traumatic stress syndrome seen a decade or more later in some combat veterans.

There is treatment for this but many doctors do not know how. If a woman is troubled, she should seek a referral from a pro-life pregnancy help center.

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