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URBANIANA PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY  
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**THE MORAL EVALUATION OF INFERTILITY  
WITH REGARD TO ABORTION AS A THREAT  
TO THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN LIFE IN TODAY'S  
WORLD: A CASE STUDY OF DR CONGO**

**Supervisor**

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**A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of Baccalaureate  
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## EPIGRAPHS

“Life is the basis of all goods, and the necessary source and condition of every human activity and of all society (**Congregation for the Doctrine of the faith, *Declaratio de Euthanasia***)”.

“The respect for life can only flourish if the prenatal life is valued and cared for from its first moment of existence (**Boniface Muema Waema**).”

“I will never harm my suffering friend, because life is sacred, from the tender fruit that he once was in his mother’s womb to that first sigh he gave out between her legs when he opened his eyes to the world” ( *Hippocratic Oath*).

## DEDICATION

To my late and beloved Dad Joseph and my dearest late Brother Gilbert,

To my beloved Mum Domina,

To my lovely Brethren James, Noella, Juvenal, Clara and Josephine,

To my dearest Rev. Sr. Jacqueline Zingi,

To my dearest Friend Liz Mungania,

To my precious Friend Brigitte Mukuba,

To Maman Anastasie's Family and

To the Kalere's Family,

To my other best friends (Louise, Christelle, Adolphe, Frank Bellarmin, Gilson, Bertrand) who, in their respective ranks have always been showing a great concern for me in various ways,

To my relatives and to all the unborn babies who will be deprived of the opportunity to read this work, and to all those who hold dear the principle of the sanctity of life for all human beings, whatever age and size, however strong or weak,

**I dedicate the noble fruit of my Labor.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My first and foremost gratitude goes to the Almighty God, Giver and Protector of human life, for his immeasurable and kind love towards me by keeping me alive this far.

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At last I acknowledge the kind assistance of all friends, relatives, the caracciolini brothers and other people of good will who in one way or another never cease to sacrifice themselves for my sake.

May God bless them abundantly.

## STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is the fruit of my personal efforts through consistent researches and an analytical approach. It is therefore submitted in view of the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Theology.

I sincerely swear that it has never been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit. Thus, all sources contained therein have been fully cited and are very much acknowledged.

Signed .....

Name of the Student: **KAMBALE TSONGO Justin**

Date:

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University College Supervisor:

Signed .....

Name of the Supervisor: **Sr. Dr. Florence KABALA, PMS**

Date:

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

D.V: *Donum Vitae*

H.V: *Human Vitae*

CCC: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

E.V: *Evangelium Vitae*

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## **ABSTRACT**

Among all the things that God created and found them good, there is life as a precious and indestructible gift that He providentially entrusted to the human person after creating him. This very same life that God gave the human person with the aim of sharing in his own life, was endowed with a sacred character due to its divine origin.

However, over several decades, it happens at times that, because of various circumstances and attempts of the human person to rule himself, he or she falls within the temptation of undervaluing life by adhering to some particular and negative ideologies that threaten life. Some of these practices are for instance Abortion, the use of Contraceptives, Euthanasia, and so forth. All these practices are mostly oriented towards the economic gain since, if they are legalized in a particular country, those who opt for them are rewarded. All these are responsible for both man's moral, social and psychological decline since they all go against God's commandment that we shouldn't kill. In addition, there are for instance countries whereby in order to strive against the large number of people, abortion is legalized as means through which the number of inhabitants may be adapted to the potentialities of the State. Others favor euthanasia as a means of getting rid of patients who have lost every kind of hope for them to recover their health; therefore, since the patients have become a burden to the family due to a lot of expenses in terms of medicine, through their consent or that of their families, they choose to undergo euthanasia which is called in other terms "the serene death", rather than continuing suffering and to bother the family. Such a fact certainly overlooks the

fact that no one here on earth has been entrusted the right to end up other people's lives without God's consent to whom such an act is exclusively reserved.

In effect, all these kinds of ideologies are really against the Biblical teaching as well as the Magisterial teaching of the Church with regard to the dignity of human life.

Having said that, of all the above-mentioned practices that challenge human life as well as the moral perspective of the human person, especially in our contemporary world, I would like to focus more upon Abortion itself as the evil practice of our times and some of the consequences that it has upon the practitioners. To be more concise, I am going to focus more over Induced abortion as far as the types of abortion are concerned. In fact, those practicing abortion and promoting it think that it is a means to free female creatures from men's exploitation, but, on the contrary, it enhances men's possibility of exploiting them since men are those who mostly induce them to abortion, especially when they are not ready to assume their responsibility towards the pregnant woman or lady after the incident has taken place. Needless to say, it is actually obvious that we are facing a very considerable moment of tending to substitute virtue to vice by opting for the easy things that we judge capable of providing us the best we need for our survival. While there are married couples longing for a child in order to stress more the unitive and procreative dimensions of marriage, there are others who joke with life by procuring abortion. Such a practice is done in various circumstances due to various causes such as safeguarding job, inability to assume the responsibility upon the newly-born baby, traumatism, unwanted pregnancy and so forth.

With regard to the consequences, we'll base all our full interest on Infertility as an inconvenience of excessive induced abortion on the side on the woman since it's really justifiable that there are women who were not born as such, but they end up becoming

unproductive because of their adherence to some evil practices or the negative influence that they acquire from their environment. The next part will be about reflecting more over the relevance of human dignity with regards to the effects caused by both moral issues. More than that, through such a practice the human person is slowly losing all the moral values with regard to life and ends up in corrupting his conscience by rendering it unable to discern on that which is good in contrast with that which is evil. This is really a challenge upon which we should try to work so that we may bring the human person back to his initial state as wanted by the Creator. This eradication will be elaborated in the light of some moral recommendations whereby we shall try to give some possible solutions that will allow us to assist women who are victims of the non-natural infertility due to their adherence to the practice of Abortion.

### **Why talking about Infertility in moral?**

All over the world and most peculiarly in Africa, life is perceived as a means through which people perpetuate the human gender by procreation. Henceforth, if it happens that the case of unproductivity is noticed in marriage life, the concerned individual or both partners are considered as being useless to the society since they cannot procreate. For Africans, there are no other peculiar reasons for such a fact if not a curse laid upon the guilty person or persons by the Ancestors. For this reason, they should look for a way to reconcile with the Ancestors so that they may become productive; otherwise, the situation will remain the same until his, her or their death. And besides, we are very much aware that when this takes place, the only person to be targeted is the woman as being infertile, and never the man while it is not always obvious as such. In addition to this, this very fact of infertility can lead unto divorce or diminish one of the partners love towards the other. In our present investigation, we would not like to reflect on

infertility in such a cultural or traditional perspective, but rather engage in it from the moral perspective with regard to Abortion. Furthermore, we will try to orient this reflection in the Democratic Republic of Congo in order to inquire more about the way Infertility causes many women to lose their dignity due to their adherence either by ignorance, influence or willingly to Abortion.

The whole of this work will be done in using the Analytical and Critical approach on both Abortion and Infertility, through the use of various sources that we will judge relevant for our contribution.

### **Hypothesis**

Like started, Abortion as a moral challenge of our time since it is intrinsically evil, is more or less something that affects human life and prevents him or her to recognize the real place that God the Creator gave him since the time of Creation. We have stated at the very beginning that Abortion goes against God's commandment of filling the world through procreation as well as that of not killing. Considered in such a way, Abortion becomes an immoral practice that prevents people from promoting and safeguarding life due to economic purposes or to inability to take care of the baby on one hand, and to self-preservation of the person who commits or incites another one to opt for it. By emphasizing the case of infertility as being part of the consequences of Abortion, this is out of a little experience acquired generally, but most specifically in Congo whereby a lot of women have lost the chance of being dated or maintaining their marriage life due to excessive practice of Abortion. In order to eradicate such a situation that even undermines the dignity of the human person in general, but mostly the woman, Abortion should be condemned at any cost as a deviation from God's command as well as from the cultural prescriptions with regard to perpetuating successive generations. On top of

that, be it natural or not, Infertility is always perceived as an unfortunate case on the side of the concerned individual as well as in the community to which he or she belongs. Now when it is caused by a non-natural practice, it becomes worse and therefore destroys human life to the extent of undermining it, a fact that leads to the loss of dignity, consideration and all the expected values.

With regard to what preceded, we may end up saying that, in order to maintain life and the human dignity, man's conscience should be trained afresh, so that it may remain intact by always clinging to the fundamental principle of choosing that which is good according the Gospel and Cultural Values.

# CHAPTER ONE

## GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPTS “ABORTION”, “INFERTILITY” AND “HUMAN DIGNITY”

### 1.1. Historical approach of Abortion

According to the Church’s view, “Among all the crimes which can be committed against life, procured abortion has characteristics making it particularly serious and deplorable. The Second Vatican Council defines abortion, together with infanticide, as an "unspeakable crime".”<sup>1</sup> And within the process of anticipating a short definition about that which people do call “interrupted pregnancy, the same document says:

“...procured abortion is the deliberate and direct killing, by whatever means it is carried out, of a human being in the initial phase of his or her existence, extending from conception to birth. The moral gravity of procured abortion is apparent in all its truth if we recognize that we are dealing with murder and, in particular, when we consider the specific elements involved. The one eliminated is a human being at the very beginning of life.”<sup>2</sup>

Having said that, Abortion may not have been an easy practice for women during ancient times, though it was widely practiced, especially among peoples from the upper

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<sup>1</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, N<sup>o</sup> 58.

<sup>2</sup> Pope John Paul II, *E. V.*, N<sup>o</sup> 58.

classes, for them to avoid the phenomenon of over-population. Hence, trying to engage in the historical approach of abortion is to prove the magnitude of the matter itself since two thousand years ago up to now. According to Livio Melina and Carlo Anderson: “The theme of procured abortion has always been at the center of ethical debate (the moral status of abortion and the need to prevent miscarriage), bioethics..., epistemology, sociological (the perception of the issue of abortion and the dynamics that underlie it).”<sup>3</sup> On his side Saint Pope John Paul II affirms:

“In order to facilitate the spread of abortion, enormous sums of money have been invested and continue to be invested in the production of pharmaceutical products which make it possible to kill the fetus in the mother's womb without recourse to medical assistance. On this point, scientific research itself seems to be almost exclusively preoccupied with developing products which are ever more simple and effective in suppressing life and which at the same time are capable of removing abortion from any kind of control or social responsibility.”<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, the statistic of abortion has been evaluated to over 46 million of abortion cases performed every year in various corners of the world. In any case, Abortion is one of the most heated political, social and religious topics of our times. Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent each year by “right-to-life” groups to raise awareness, fight for more abortion restrictions in the United States and around the world, and to support “pro-life” political candidates. This is rendered very much explicit by Brian Clowes who affirms the same thing as follows: “In practice, though, abortion in a number of countries (including the United States, Canada and the People’s Republic of China) is

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<sup>3</sup> Melina L. and Anderson C., *Oil on the Wounds: A contemporary examination of the Effects of Divorce and Abortion on Children and their Families*, 169.

<sup>4</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, N<sup>o</sup> 13.

legal until the moment of birth.”<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, depending over various periods of times with different insights, the practice of abortion has always been perceived as being either positive or negative. For some it was never a very moral practice, whereas for others it was to be promoted as a means through which the adherents were to remedy some particular situations such as over-population in the state while the potentials are not sufficient, poverty and so forth. Needless to say, as stressed by Michael Borman, “if abortion two thousand years ago was more dangerous for the woman than it is in today’s well-equipped clinics, it was nevertheless readily available and widely practiced at the time the Christian Church was born...Abortion was a subject of Greek legal, medical, philosophical and religious concern.”<sup>6</sup> Michael’s statement implies the fact that Abortion as such is not a new reality in human life, but rather has always been there as a very challenging practice widely promoted, be it among pagans or among believers of various Christian denominations. For some, especially in the Greek world, Abortion came as a threat and a contradiction to Hippocrates’ oath whereby he vowed to value human life at any cost since life is precious. Through his oath Hippocrates tried to show that any attempt for man to use an abortive pessary was perceived as being a poison and should be rejected as an attack however not so much on the fetus as on the woman. Moreover, we could be aware that in the Greek world those who promoted abortion are the great philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, but following some criteria. John Dedek talking about the reality of abortion in the Greco-Roman world says that “Plato had accepted abortion for population control and so had Aristotle, but

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<sup>5</sup> Clowes B., *The Facts of Life*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Borman M., *Abortion and the Early Church: Christian, Jewish and Pagan Attitudes in the Greco-Roman World*, 18-19.

only before “sensation and life”.<sup>7</sup> On his side, Michael Borman explains the various reasons for both Plato and Aristotle to support Abortion as follows:

“...It is highly unlikely that either philosopher condoned abortion generally or for personal convenience. Rather, each held a utilitarian view of the individual, born or unborn, seeing that individual as existing for the state. No rights granted to the individual were absolute. All rights-even the right to life-were subordinate to the welfare of the state and had to be sacrificed if the best interests of the state demanded it.”<sup>8</sup>

At this very point Michael intends to highlight the fact that nothing in the Greek world was to be valued to the detriment of the state since everything was to be given meaning in the name of the State. Thus, as mentioned above, even the right to life was to be sacrificed for the betterment of the State, no matter how people could say life is precious. This was in fact a kind of alienation by the state by forgetting the very fact that we cannot talk of the State without people existing or living in the first place. Referring to the Roman tradition and its laws, there was one concerning human life which stipulated that there shouldn't be any attempt of giving abortifacient drugs which were dangerous to the mother and forbade any abortion performed without the father's consent. However, such a law which was to be considered as universal got some opponents due to their personal interests whereby abortion impacted upon human lives as a way for them to make life easier than expected and avoid so many troubles. With regard to this, in spite of the fact that besides the law which forbade to give abortifacient drugs to the pregnant woman, there was another one which never approved the fact that

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<sup>7</sup> Dedek J., *Human Life: Some moral Issues*, 33.

<sup>8</sup> Borman M., *Abortion and the Early Church: Christian, Jewish and Pagan Attitudes in the Greco-Roman World*, 22-23.

Romans strove against abortion since they sided with the stoics that, of course abortion should be fought, by then that the unborn is not yet a human being. This also brought a bit of confusions in the mind of peoples. But in any case, Michael tries to affirm the triumph of the positive consideration of human life during the time of Emperor Septimus Severus who decreed an act against abortion as follows:

“... Abortion was classified among the *crimina extraordinaria*, crimes punished arbitrarily, outside the formulary system and without fixed penalty. The rescript prescribed exile of an unspecified (but not permanent) length for a wife who procured an abortion, because it might appear scandalous that she should be able to deprive her husband of children without being punished.”<sup>9</sup>

Reaching the Christian context with regard to abortion, we perceive that its teaching was inspired by the positive statements of the Greco-Roman world in reference to both the Hippocratic Oath and the Roman law despite the difficulty that they faced in terms of application. But before talking properly about the Christian context, we refer to the Jewish culture whereby, though not clearly mentioned in Scriptures, it is asserted that most of the abortionists were pagans. Following the two schools which existed in the Jewish tradition, both the Alexandrian and the Palestian schools perceived abortion as a murder, and therefore should be liable to punishment. Despite their division in terms of the penalty which was to be given to the guilty ones in that matter, they both had a positive view of human life. As a result of this, Abortion ended up winning even the Christian world since those who were its members were at the same time the ones promoting it. As a matter of fact, a very consistent and fast solution was to be brought about, such that in the light of the prominent sources like the “*Didachè*”, the Epistle of

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<sup>9</sup> Borman M., *Abortion and the Early Church: Christian, Jewish and Pagan Attitudes in the Greco-Roman World*, 30.

Barnabas and some other writings of the Church fathers, life may be preserved at any cost as a proof of love towards both its Author who is God, and towards the neighbor who is reflecting the face of the Creator. Slowly by slowly abortion ended up becoming a famous practice in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in some confines of the world such as in America, Scotland, England to the extent that it reached some African countries through a legal procedure or not, until nowadays where we are exposed to various realities of the contemporary world dominated by technology and various ideologies, provided that the promoters may move forward in terms of economics. Having said that, it is convenient to stress that this short historical approach of abortion permits us to understand how far and possible abortion is not an ethical question of just our times, but rather has some background in the antiquity, now and even probably in the future days. It is after this short historical approach that I will be tackling the point of the meaning of the Concept of “Abortion” and “Infertility” together with human dignity as grasped through various sources.

## **1.2. Abortion Quid?**

As we may all grasp it, abortion is known as a process or an act through which the fetus is either deliberately or not, removed from the mother’s womb as a solution for the practitioners to preserve the woman’s life once endangered by the pregnancy. Though applied to female creatures and are part of the immoral practices that go against life, abortion and contraception differ from each other in that abortion is a complete destruction of human life when the fetus is still in his mother’s womb, whereas contraception applies to the case of preventing the existence of a complete and independent human being. Abortion as an termination or expulsion of the fetus in the womb of the mother, goes in contrast with the Church’s conception about life with

regard to the Fifth commandment in the following terms: “Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstances claim for himself the right to destroy an innocent human being.”<sup>10</sup> In the same way, it really contradicts Pope Pius XII’s teaching on the sacredness of life as follows: “The life of an innocent person is untouchable and every direct attack or aggression against it violates one of the fundamental laws without which secure living in human society is impossible.”<sup>11</sup> According to the Oxford Dictionary, abortion is defined as being “the deliberate ending of a PREGNANCY at an early stage... It is also a medical operation to end a PREGNANCY at an early stage.”<sup>12</sup> On the same note, Henry OKULLU defines abortion as “the spontaneous or technical termination of pregnancy before the fetus is 28 weeks, when it is considered to be viable.”<sup>13</sup> In the same perspective abortion is defined by Jeffrey as “... the intentional termination of pregnancy either by killing the fetus directly or by removing the fetus from the womb with the result that it dies. Surgical removal of a viable fetus that lives on is, then, not abortion. It terminates pregnancy, but it does not result in the death of the fetus.”<sup>14</sup> In its aim of preserving the right to life in America since 1968, the National Right to life defines abortion as that which “actually refers to any premature expulsion of a human fetus, whether naturally spontaneous, as in a miscarriage, or artificially induced, as in a surgical or chemical abortion. Today, the most common usage of the term "abortion" applies to artificially

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<sup>10</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2258.

<sup>11</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Casti Conubii*, n. 173.

<sup>12</sup> Oxford, *Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, New 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Okullu H., *Church and Marriage in East Africa*, 50.

<sup>14</sup> Jeffrey R., *Abortion and the Ways we value Human Life*, 8.

induced abortion... Abortion ends a pregnancy by destroying and removing the developing child.”<sup>15</sup> In the light of these selective definitions we understand that abortion is a very serious means and practice promoted by pro-choice individuals, through which a woman can be freed from the danger of death due to pregnancy after noticing that the fetus has become a threat for the mother or the female creature to continue living.

### **1.3. Types of Abortion**

In this present investigation I would like to deliver the types of abortion that are commonly known, depending however on various circumstances, reasons and ways through which abortion is performed. In the light of Brian Clowes’ book entitled “the Facts of Life”, there are about 14 types of abortion among which the most notorious one is Induced abortion. Thus, according to Valentino Lema and Janet Kabeberi, the reason-being of the upcoming categorization was due to various aspects such as:

“The desire for categorization came about as a result of observations made in day-to-day life and in hospital settings: some of the women who have had abortions volunteer a history of interference, while those who deny such a history reveal tell-tale signs suggestive of probable interference and when pressed further sometimes admit to the fact. Secondly, there is something peculiar about the socio-demographic characteristics, reproductive histories and complications of the women with induced abortion compared with those with non-induced abortion.

...Thirdly, the criteria used are not uniform and are indeed very subjective. Fourthly, the complications which may compel one to seek medical attention are also quite

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.nrlc.org/abortion/medicalfacts/techniques/>

variable. Some of them may have none at all, whereas some of the non-induced (spontaneous) may have very serious complications and may therefore be labelled otherwise.”<sup>16</sup>

In the light of Valentino’s reasons that justify the categorization of abortion into two, it is convenient to engage in the way both are grasped.

### **1.3.1. Induced Abortion**

Known in other words as “direct abortion”, this type of abortion is credited to have been existing from far back in history and is mostly performed through new modern methods. It has, according to Valentino, “been used as a method of regulating fertility either in the absence of contraception or as an adjuvant to it in cases of failure. For some people and societies around the world it is the only method of fertility regulation, while for others it is used in conjunction with some form of contraception.”<sup>17</sup> To add on that, Brian Clowes defines this type of abortion as being “An intentional abortion brought on by mechanical (surgical) or chemical (abortifacient) means.”<sup>18</sup> In addition, after a bit of experience and some researches made, it has been noticed that this type is the most frequently practiced one since most of people who think of aborting, are aware of it and therefore give their consent in one way or another; however, though there is no clear proof for the concerned individual to abort, but rather she is pushed by someone else, we can still talk of induced abortion as long as there is the recognition of the participation of free will and conscience. On the same note, Induced abortion as a frequent practice in contrast to non-induced abortion is justified by the very fact that most of those who opt for it are fully aware of that which they are intending to do and

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<sup>16</sup> Valentino and Janet, *A Review of Abortion in Kenya*, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Valentino, *A Review of Abortion in Kenya*, 13.

<sup>18</sup> Clowes B., *The Facts of Life*, 3.

defend themselves to deliver reasons for it. Some do affirm that induced abortion is performed because of their inability to sustain themselves; others perceive unwanted pregnancy as being a disgraceful situation that hinders them from fulfilling their heart desires in terms of working, studying or living peacefully. As a matter of fact, choosing induced abortion is a credible solution for them to regain their freedom and move forward in their aim of achieving their different goals of life. In the light of this, it is convenient to remind that the most concerned individual in this type of abortion is the woman who willingly decides to terminate the either unplanned or undesired pregnancy through various means. And according to Valentino and Janet:

“The decision to abort/terminate the pregnancy is in most cases the woman’s own.

She doesn’t involve her male counterpart even when married. In the rare cases when the man is involved he suggests or in fact recommends the abortion.

This again underlines the secretive nature of induced abortion and perhaps indicates that possibly a good proportion of the induced abortions among married women may in fact be because the pregnancies are from extra-marital relations.<sup>19</sup>

With regard to this, induced abortion as such is the type of abortion which most of those who practice abortion do consider so much since it gives them various ways or solutions without which they believe they cannot get rid of the pregnancy. This is simply because, by the time they have opted for it, they are given all possible means and are even directed by other people who are already expert in it to know places where they are supposed to go and regain their initial identity since for them, unexpected pregnancy corrupts their original identity and status.

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<sup>19</sup> Valentino, *A Review of Abortion in Kenya*, 15.

In summary, induced abortion is a deliberate, voluntary and conscious removal of the embryo in the mother's womb before viability.

### **1.3.2. Non-Induced abortion**

Unlike the former type, known in other words as “spontaneous or indirect abortion”, non-induced abortion is a kind of abortion which takes place through biological issues whereby due to the complications of the pregnancy into the woman or mother's womb, abortion occurs without the awareness of the concerned individual. In effect, acknowledging that such type of abortion doesn't have very serious and considerable complications as well as inconveniences on the female creature, non-induced abortion doesn't depend on the active attendance of the pregnant woman and doesn't take place through the use of particular medications or peculiar techniques, if not that it is somehow natural and normal. It is according to Valentino just “a natural, an unconscious, involuntary and undeliberate act performed to remove the fetus from the mother's womb before the expiry of the gestation period. During this very situation, the woman might even be distressed and even mentally troubled because of losing the fetus which she was expecting to be a child.”<sup>20</sup> It is just an abortion that takes place surprisingly without anything planned in advance. Nevertheless, this type of abortion is not as famous or frequent as induced abortion is since it rarely takes place and is ignored by many people. Moreover, after such an abortion has taken place, there is no way that the pregnant woman or female creature can be held responsible for it, though it may be occasioned by some problems like those related to the physical appearance of the woman, psychological troubles (quarrels, war, frequent sicknesses, etc), life conditions whereby she didn't perhaps receive proper feeding, or again she was not

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<sup>20</sup> Valentino, *A Review of Abortion in Kenya*, 15.

used to faithfully follow the doctor's instructions in terms of resting sufficiently, working moderately and so forth. In short, non-induced abortion occurs independently of the pregnant woman and doesn't require any external intervention in terms of using means or techniques which are used in Induced abortion. It is rather due to biological complications inside the organism of the pregnant woman.

#### **1.4. Techniques used for Abortion**

Since abortion involves the expulsion of the unwanted pregnancy within the womb of the pregnant woman as a means of saving her life by killing the fetus, there are various and common techniques applied to such a practice, depending certainly on the size and stages of the pregnancy. All the upcoming strategies that we will highlight aim at killing the unborn baby into his or her mother's womb so that the mother may continue to survive. Notwithstanding, most cases of abortion are actually performed through consuming some drugs in various periods of the pregnancy.

As learned from Sister Kabala Florence's notes,

“Biologically pregnancy is divided into three trimesters and for each trimester a specific method of abortion is used.

The kind of abortion procedure done depends on the length of time the woman has been pregnant. Termination of pregnancy depends on the size of fetus and stage of the pregnancy consequently appropriate techniques are used, and most of these techniques involve killing of the fetus while in the womb.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Sr. Dr. KABALA F., PMS, Notes on *Abortion and Human Life*, 2018-2019.

Moreover, in the light of various researches and experiences, it has been noticed that, depending on the environment and the culture of people, there are various means or strategies which are considered useful for women or female creatures to terminate pregnancy. Engaging in that which regards the strategies used to abort, Valentino records the case of abortion in Kenya as follows:

“There are traditional methods of interrupting pregnancies which have and still continue to be used in some communities in Kenya. These are basically practiced in the more traditional societies where there has been very little external influence... They include ingestion of herbal preparations; intrauterine insertion of foreign bodies such as sticks or roots of specific types of trees; uterine massage...”<sup>22</sup>

Apart from the traditional techniques used mostly in Africa, especially in non-developed areas to perform abortion, i.e. induced abortion, some modern techniques are given by the National Right to Life in its concern about preserving life in America as follows:

**1.4.1. “Suction aspiration, or "vacuum curettage,"** is the abortion technique used in most first trimester abortions. [9] A powerful suction tube with a sharp cutting edge is inserted into the womb through the dilated cervix... While many people focus solely on RU 486, the so-called " French abortion pill," the RU 486 technique actually uses two powerful synthetic hormones with the generic names of mifepristone and misoprostol [17] to chemically induce abortions in women five-to-nine weeks pregnant...

**1.4.2. Dilatation and Evacuation:** Used to abort unborn children as old as 24 weeks...

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<sup>22</sup> Valentino, *A Review of Abortion in Kenya*, 14.

**1.4.3. Salt Poisoning:** Otherwise known as "saline amniocentesis," "salting out," or a "hypertonic saline" abortion, this technique is used after 16 weeks of pregnancy, when enough fluid has accumulated in the amniotic fluid sac surrounding the baby.

A needle is inserted through the mother's abdomen and 50-250 ml (as much as a cup) of amniotic fluid is withdrawn and replaced with a solution of concentrated salt. [53] The baby breathes in, swallowing the salt, and is poisoned.

**1.4.4. Partial- Birth-Abortion:** ... This procedure is used to abort women who are 20 to 32 weeks pregnant -- or even later into pregnancy.\* Guided by ultrasound, the abortionist reaches into the uterus, grabs the unborn baby's leg with forceps, and pulls the baby into the birth canal, except for the head, which is deliberately kept just inside the womb. (At this point in a partial-birth abortion, the baby is alive.) Then the abortionist jams scissors into the back of the baby's skull and spreads the tips of the scissors apart to enlarge the wound. After removing the scissors, a suction catheter is inserted into the skull and the baby's brains are sucked out. The collapsed head is then removed from the uterus...<sup>23</sup>

Elsewhere, we may find out that there are some other techniques used in order to perform abortion depending on the evolution of pregnancy. They are:

**“1.4.5. Menstrual Extraction:** This procedure is performed before a pregnancy test is obtained, usually between 5-6 weeks from the woman's last menstrual period (LMP).

Mifepristone/the Abortion Pill (formerly known as RU-486) –Early pregnancy : This is an anti-progesterone drug that blocks receptors of progesterone, a hormone a woman's body produces to establish and maintain pregnancy. Mifepristone breaks

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.nrlc.org/abortion/medicalfacts/techniques/>

down the lining of the uterus so that the pregnancy cannot continue. It is not effective enough to be given alone.

**1.4.6. Morning -After Pills (Emergency Pill) before 24 hours of sexual intercourse:** The Morning-After Pill is performed in the first trimester to prevent pregnancy from taking place: it works by delaying ovulation so that the sperm does not meet the egg thus preventing fertilization from taking place.

**1.4.7. Methotrexate – 7 weeks:** This drug, given by injection or occasionally orally, stops fetal cell division. Misoprostol, a prostaglandin, is inserted vaginally several days after the methotrexate is administered in order to cause uterine contractions. Methotrexate is most effective when used through 7 weeks of LMP.”<sup>24</sup>

For pro-choice individuals, all the above-mentioned strategies are those that allow them to come across a successful achievement of preserving women from death once impregnated against their will or against their expectations. These techniques are in fact very common ones which however never go without any impact over those who do opt for them. That is why in the upcoming point we will try to talk of some of the consequences which result from the use of those methods.

After talking about Abortion, especially Induced abortion, the next point is for us to shortly think of the way Infertility as a fact linked to Abortion is grasped. However, it is very convenient to remind that we are talking about Infertility not as natural fact or an innate fact, but rather as a consequence of the excessive practice of Abortion and its effects on the mother. As such, according to the common understanding, Infertility is understood as man’s or woman’s inability to procreate or to child-bearing. In addition, Muroki defines Infertility as that which “primarily refers to the biological inability of a person to contribute to a conception. Infertility may also refer to the state of a woman who is unable to carry a pregnancy to term. ...Infertility can and has caused many

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<sup>24</sup> Notes from Sr. Dr. Kabala F., PMS, on *Abortion and Human Life*, 2018-2019.

serious problems in many marriages. In some traditions, a married man is never accorded any recognition, without children.”<sup>25</sup> On the same note and with regard to women who are mostly targeted in that issue, Willer K. adds that:

“Infertile women experience three particular stressors as they face challenges getting pregnant, staying pregnant, and giving birth to a live child. First, infertility treatment is stressful given the financial and emotional burdens associated with such care. Second, the experience of infertility has been linked to psychological health outcomes such as an increased depression and decreased self-esteem. Third, women also face relational challenges, as they struggle to find support from partners and social network members in the face of their disease... With spouses, women can feel a lack of instrumental and emotional support, as well as turmoil about whether to blame themselves or their husbands for infertility issues...”<sup>26</sup>

Having a look at the African conception of the matter, Infertility undermines men, but mostly the women’s dignity and consideration in the society since according to the African culture, they are no longer actively contributing to the prolongation and perpetuation of successive generations. This makes of Infertility an immoral act which can jeopardize human whole’s life, or even lead unto the expulsion of a man or a woman from the society. This is in fact due to the African insistence over the preciousness of life first as a gift from God, and afterwards as a gift from the Ancestors to strengthen their communion. Up to this point we may understand that Infertility is not also an easy fact as Abortion itself since both of them are challenging issues within human life in his or her relationship with God and the rest of the community members. Henceforth,

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<sup>25</sup> Muroki F., “Infertility, A Threat to Marriage”, 25.

<sup>26</sup> Willer E. K., “Health-care Provider Compassionate Love and Women’s Infertility Stressors”, 407; 409-410.

two of them need some solutions to be applied such that the concerned individuals may regain the original identity and dignity as members of the same community journeying towards one common ideal.

What comes next is to talk briefly about human dignity as far as its understanding is concerned with regard to both abortion and infertility known as the major challenges that threaten human life. Following William E. May's statement about human dignity, we say: "... The very dignity of man created to the image of God consists in this: that God wished man to share in his dominion. God has left man in the hands of his own counsel. To take his or another's life is a sin..."<sup>27</sup> In fact, by human dignity we may grasp man's sacred character inherited from the very fact of having been created in God's image and likeness; he therefore deserves respect and too much consideration. By looking at man God's image should be perceived since the human being can never considered at the same level as it should be for the rest of the creatures. This is due to various gifts or faculties entrusted to mankind by God for a well-known purpose. More than that, respect for human dignity finds its meaning through showing reverence to life since it is the first gratuitous gift that mankind do enjoy from God's providence. Henceforth, any kind of violation exercised over life as far as human dignity is concerned, should be overcome at any cost since it strays from God's plan and expectations from human beings. This is so to speak a desire to mention the issue of abortion and all that it is related to it in the process of undermining human life and man's dignity.

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<sup>27</sup> May W., *Sex, love and procreation*, 16.

## 1.5. Conclusion

Throughout this first part of our work we tried to engage into the historical approach of abortion as grasped and considered since very many centuries starting with the Greco-Roman world until our times. Abortion is not a new fact of which people are not aware; it is as old as history and human beings are, despite the fact that it is apprehended in various ways according to various people, circumstances and places. From the historical approach we moved to the understanding of the concept of abortion itself whereby we defined it as a deliberate and conscious expulsion of the pregnancy from the mother's womb to the detriment of the fetus. In order for abortion to take place, there are techniques that we tried to underline such as the use traditional means which involve using a piece of wood, rubber or plastic objects into the womb in order to irritate or dislodge the growing fetus; others use modern ones like taking tablets or pills, consuming liquids, provided that they may come to a successful achievement. It is after this that I moved to the point regarding Infertility as related to Abortion and ended up talking briefly about human dignity since induced abortion is known as that which threatens human life and shows disrespect for human dignity. Talking once more briefly about Infertility as understood by Dr John Fleming, it "is a symptom of underlying disease. The diseases that cause infertility have a "two-pronged" effect. They not only hinder the functioning of fertility, but they also cause both short and long-term health problems."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Dr. Fleming J., *Dignitas Personae Explained*, 32-33.

With all that has been said so far, it follows that, since all these practices cannot be without effects, in the next session we are going to talk about the causes and the consequences which result from them, respectively with abortion itself. Both causes and effects will be classified into various categories such as physical, psychological, moral and spiritual.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **FROM THE MORAL APPROACH OF INFERTILITY AS CONNECTED WITH ABORTION IN DR CONGO**

#### **2.1. The African Understanding of both “Abortion and Infertility”**

After highlighting some details about abortion, its causes, types and strategies used by pro-choices to make it successful, in this very part, we are going to tackle some elements which are connected to both abortion and infertility as far as their consequences are concerned in the African context, but most particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We are very much aware that there are a lot of values which are promoted in Africa in all perspectives namely religious, moral and social. Regarding for instance the issue of abortion in terms of protecting human life, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI records the African Synod of Bishops stand as follows:

“Among the initiatives aimed at protecting human life on the African continent, the Synod members took into consideration the efforts expended by international institutions to promote certain aspects of development...The Church’s position on the matter of abortion is unambiguous. The child in his or her mother’s womb is a human life which must be protected. Abortion, which is the destruction of an innocent unborn child, is contrary to God’s will, for the value and dignity of human life must be protected from conception to natural death. The Church in Africa and the neighbouring islands must be committed to offering help and support to women and couples tempted to seek an abortion, while remaining close to those who have

had this tragic experience and helping them to grow in respect for life. She acknowledges the courage of governments that have legislated against the culture of death – of which abortion is a dramatic expression – in favour of the culture of life.”<sup>29</sup>

In the same way, while talking for instance about the moral and social values we may emphasize community life whereby every member is important as long as he or she has something prominent to contribute to the welfare of the society. With regard to life, its relevance and the universal call to safeguard it in the African vision, according to Benezet Bujo:

“If biological life comes from God through the mediation of the ancestors, this same God and the ancestors have taken care to equip the clan community and the tribal group with a moral order...Accordingly, the duty to prolong life is not the exclusive competence of those placed at the head of the hierarchical ladder of participation in life, but each member, at whatever level, is bound to contribute effectively to the strengthening and promotion of life common to all.”<sup>30</sup>

This being the case, it follows that any harm caused towards human life such as Abortion in our peculiar context, automatically affects all the community members since it challenges the moral duty for all to preserve life as a gift from God, transmitted through the ancestors. That is why in as much as Abortion is concerned, Bujo goes on saying that: “Seen in this strictly African perspective, the evil that someone commits is ultimately affecting human life itself, and this is what constitutes “sin”.”<sup>31</sup>

Given this context, threatening human life is also evil due to the fact that life is perceived as a means through which the society can stand firm through procreation, and

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<sup>29</sup> Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus*, n<sup>o</sup> 70.

<sup>30</sup> Bujo B., *African Christian Morality, At the Age of Inculturation*, 76-77.

<sup>31</sup> Bujo B., *African Christian Morality, At the Age of Inculturation*, 77.

as matter of fact promoting various and successive generations. Apart from the African view of life, we also have the African sense of respect towards the elders as well as towards the ancestors which leads to communion with both the living and the dead by virtue of their unceasing belonging to the society. Next to this, there is the African requirement of respecting the Word since it is itself “strength. It goes then without saying that all these exemplary values never go without challenges due to various influences and realities of life. While people are encouraged to promote moral values from the perspective of choosing good and hating evil, it happens that man’s conscience becomes compromised to the extent of undermining those values and starts living according to a certain external option which is suggested to him or her. This then involves the case of abortion as that which rids from the African requirement of respecting life that we received from a Supreme Being. Next to incest which is perceived as being a taboo in Africa, abortion, if taken as a threat to human life, becomes also a taboo since it contradicts and challenges the African values, especially the one that encourages individuals to be heralds of procreation through marriage as also a value in Africa. Taken as such, abortion also doesn’t go without consequences, and that is why among the consequences which may result from it, we stress the case of Infertility, if at all it doesn’t lead to death.

As such, Infertility has always been a challenge in the African marriage life since it contradicts the value of actively and naturally contributing to perpetuating successive generations through procreation. Given the value placed on children in most of the African societies, the infertile couples mostly experience difficult marital relations which often times than not result in domestic violence, permanent separation or divorce. Be it on the side of a man or a woman, infertility is perceived as a curse laid on the

concerned individual in the sense of having offended the Supreme Being and the Ancestors, and hence probably requires some rituals to be performed. However, if taken naturally, Infertility as a taboo is never very much seen as a fact that can be applied to both man and woman, but rather to the woman, and as a matter of fact, being in such a state, the African society considers her as a useless creature who should even be prevented from any kind of respect at the same title as the man. This is sometimes unbearable because many experiences have proven that there are cases whereby men are also unable to procreate due to various reasons such as abusive use of drugs, or they were born as such. But in any case, in the present investigation We intend to leave aside the general application of infertility to both man and woman, if not focusing more on its influence upon the woman with regard to abortion, bearing still in mind that in one way or another, man can sometimes be held responsible for the woman's infertility by inciting her to abort. In this case then Infertility is not understood as a natural phenomenon, but rather as a fact caused by something else. In fact, the inability for a lady or woman to procreate compromises her whole life. Moreover, every kind of events surrounding childless women are more likely of perpetual separations, divorce and sometimes remarrying; a wife could go away because of her husband's ill treatment and torture from others or even because of her husbands' demand that she should go away since she is helpless. On the other side, some experiences have proven that, infertility as a result of abortion, never in its turn goes without effects over the female creatures such as living a miserable life, contracting mental troubles, and losing chance to get married. So far, abortion and infertility are understood in Africa as two facts that threaten human life and jeopardize especially the female consideration within the society. They are considered as two moral evils that challenge African moral and social values in terms of relating with the Supreme Being, the Ancestors, the living and the

living dead of the society as a sign of communion. Such a communion should be effective on the condition that there may be life first.

## **2.2.The Congolese View about “Abortion and Infertility”**

All that which we tried to say about the two moral issues in Africa can certainly be applied to the DR Congo since it is part of the African Western countries. With time we will come to notice that there is no great difference between the general African conception of both Abortion and Infertility” and the specific understanding of the Democratic Republic of Congo with regard to those matters since it is also an African state with an African background. Funny enough, as we will be proceeding we will notice that the very same effects that we talked of in the previous point are almost the same in Congo in terms of the impact of Abortion and Infertility on the female congolese human beings, especially the youth. As such, Abortion related to Infertility is not a new issue in DR Congo since it has been revealed that most of its victims are young ladies who get pregnant either willingly or unwillingly through things like rape, incestuous unions or illegal sexual intercourses held may be through prostitution. According to Ganesh Dungal: “In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the penal code prohibits the provision of abortion. In practice, however, it is widely accepted that the procedure can be performed to save the life of a pregnant woman. Although abortion is highly restricted, anecdotal evidence indicates that women often resort to clandestine abortions, many of which are unsafe.”<sup>32</sup> In addition, some other researches prove that:

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<sup>32</sup> Dungal G., “*The incidence of induced abortion in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo*”, 2016, <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.01843>

“Kinshasa is the DRC’s capital and largest urban area, and its population of 12 million accounts for 15% of the country’s total population. There is currently no reliable estimate of the incidence of abortion for the DRC as a whole, but the following new data are available for Kinshasa... An estimated 146,700 abortions were performed in Kinshasa in 2016. This translates to an abortion rate of 56 per 1,000 women of reproductive age (15–49), which is much higher than the regional rate for Middle Africa overall (35 per 1,000 women in 2010–2014.). The abortion rate in the urban center of Kinshasa is likely higher than that for the country as a whole, given that a pattern of elevated rates in capital cities has been observed in other African countries where nationally representative studies have been conducted. Unsafe abortion is common in Kinshasa, and the level of postabortion care gives clues as to its prevalence and consequences. In 2016, an estimated 37,900 women obtained treatment in health facilities for abortion-related complications. These women represent only a portion of those who experienced an unsafe abortion: Some women encounter barriers that prevent them from obtaining needed postabortion care, while others do not require such care.”<sup>33</sup>

A very particular case has been recorded in the Capital city, Kinshasa, found in Western part of the country whereby due to their inability to respond to their various needs, young ladies and some married women opt for prostitution and uncontrolled relationships. Thus, once impregnated, some of them decide to get rid of the pregnancy so that they may further their studies or preserve their job as well as marital life. Nowadays we have been talking of the famous slogan called “Ujana” whereby young ladies from 16 to 25 years old are being trained to prostitution, and therefore since it has become a profession, all these ladies can never make any mistake of getting pregnant since it will be a threat for them to continue earning their daily bread as they think. A very short way out to continue their profession is then to abort because once pregnant they are limited to have regular sexual intercourses and it leads unto

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.gutmacher.org/fact-sheet/abortion-kinshasa>

employment. Abortion is certainly a fact which is very much known all over the country whereby some ladies do either willingly abort or because they are pushed by other people or themselves, for various reasons; others abort due to their inability to integrate the shameful fact of rape or incest; others especially young ones abort in order to further their studies and think by so doing, they will safeguard more chance for them to get dated. A recent research made on the case of rape in DR Congo as an unbearable fact for a the victim to give birth to a child who results from such an unhuman act, talks a Congolese woman who states that abortion should be legalized for such cases, despite what the Constitutions stipulate. Named Mrs. Pélégie Ebeka, she attests:

“... A raped woman, a victim of incest where the woman whose pregnancy endangers her physical and mental health, can apply for abortion, although Congolese penal code does not authorize it, underlining that “Abortion is and remains an offense or an act incriminated by the penal code “, with the exception of therapeutic abortion which is authorized by the code of medical ethics”... Pélégie Ebeka asked for a harmonization with Congolese laws which penalize the abortion, recalling that it is since July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2003, that the protocol of Maputo also called Protocol of African Charter of the humans right of the peoples relative to the women’s rights in Africa, was adopted.”<sup>34</sup>

For sure, in its constitutions and penal code, the Democratic Republic of Congo never values abortion as being an encouraging practice, no matter how difficult life can be or the government may be incapable of providing all the necessary for its citizens to experience a very dignifying life. According to the penal code of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), abortion is prohibited without exception. The vast majority

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<sup>34</sup><http://acpcongo.com/acp/en/for-the-legalization-of-the-abortion-of-congolese-women-victims-of-sexual-violence/>

of abortions occurring in the DRC are clandestine, and many of these are unsafe. In its 16<sup>th</sup> Article pertaining to the human's life protection, the Congolese Constitutions stipulate that:

“The individual is sacred. The State has the obligation to respect and protect him/her. All persons have the right to life, physical integrity and to the free development of their personality, while respecting the law, public order, the rights of others and public morality.

No one may be held in slavery or in a similar condition.

No one may be subject to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment.

No one may be submitted to forced or compulsory labor.”<sup>35</sup>

At this very juncture, while considering Abortion as a very challenging issue in DRC and therefore a practice which should be overcome at all cost, this view is given in the light of the Christian understanding of life itself as a gift from God, and since Congo is also one of the reputable Christian countries, especially majority of them are Catholics, abortion is evil. Elsewhere, the Constitutions stipulate that “abortion is punishable for 5-15 years of imprisonment”<sup>36</sup>since it is legally speaking a crime, and also a sin against God the Creator.

### **2.2.1. Effects of both Abortion and Infertility in DR Congo**

In this very point we would like to talk about some consequences which result from induced abortion and the strategies used for it to be successful. Basically, we know that anything that is done with erroneous conscience and therefore strays from the right path of journeying towards a virtuous life can never contribute to the welfare of the society

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<sup>35</sup> DRC-CONGO, *Constitutions*, 2005

<sup>36</sup> *DRC CONSTITUTIONS*, 2005.

and its members. Henceforth, since abortion is one of the practices and facts that destroys human life, there are some negative impacts that it exercises over the woman/couple, depending on and the circumstances within which it has been performed. According to some other researches, it has been revealed that Abortion doesn't go without effects over the woman's whole life. It is therefore said that:

“Most women presenting for postabortion care in 2016 had a secondary education or higher. About three-quarters had not had an abortion before, and 81% were in their first trimester when they terminated their pregnancy.

Women's health outcomes varied according to social and economic factors. Women who were single or cohabiting had nearly twice the odds of those who were formally married of experiencing severe or moderate complications, and poor women had higher odds of experiencing severe or moderate complications than nonpoor women.”<sup>37</sup>

In the same way, while the society is always a place where life is to be consistently preserved and virtues are supposed to be promoted as well as where each member are concerned with the common good through his or her endeavor if done properly and in a right way, the existence of abortion and its consequences become a threat to the achievement of such a social ideal. These consequences might be physical, psychological, biological, moral and spiritual.

When we talk of the physical consequences of induced and excessive abortion we want to mean death itself whereby in the process of willing to preserve the mother's life to the detriment of the fetus, things worsen and therefore two of them pass on. Such a fact eventually leads to the double loss of individuals and life ends from there. Next to death,

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<sup>37</sup> <https://www.gutmacher.org/fact-sheet/abortion-kinshasa>

if the mother doesn't die, there will be some repercussions of abortion on her physical appearance whereby her health weakens more and more to the extent that she starts contracting many diseases since the cells are no longer strong as they used to be before. To this effect, the most physical effect on the woman is infertility or childlessness whereby due to the mother's excessive involvement into abortion, she ends up becoming unproductive while she was not naturally created as such. It is moreover a failure to achieve pregnancy after one year of exposure to pregnancy risk or after one year of regular unprotected sexual intercourse in the absence of known reproductive pathology. This inability to reproduce has negative implications on women in an African environment where high fertility is preferred. In this regard, Infertility is perceived as being both a social and a medical problem in the sense that Infertility is both a social as well as a medical problem in the very sense that we live in a society where womanhood and manhood are generally associated with childbearing.

In addition, the medical literature has revealed that the causes of infertility affect both men and women. Due to this, many people therefore assert that Infertility or childlessness is a counter-value in Africa since it is against procuring life and diminishes hope for the African society to acquire more members through various successive generations. This questioning consequence is that which will attract our attention in the upcoming part of our work since after various experiences and investigations we have come up with the conclusion that infertility is not just natural, but also can result from a particular evil practice which we already know as abortion.

Turning then to the psychological effects of abortion on the mother we may emphasize the case of mental troubles whereby the aborted fetus keeps coming back to the mother's mind and provokes more worries within her. During this very moment the

mother is no longer at peace, always recalling the event and feels bad to have opted for such a choice. Thus, if it continues, the mother will end up losing her mind and as a matter of fact, should undergo counselling. Such an abominable act shows how many times evil things keep on disturbing human beings' conscience so far as they make up their mind. To this effect, may we recall that, with regard to the effects of Infertility as a result of induced abortion known as a very challenging inconvenience which leads married couples to separate or divorce, and lessens the chances for girls to get married, the very same effects that we talked of in the African perspective with regard to Infertility on the woman, are the same that can be mentioned here as impacting many Congolese ladies or women in terms of being isolated, undermined, addicted to alcohol, drug, smoking, sleeplessness, loss of weight, loss of past memories and so on.

### **2.3. General Causes**

#### **2.3.1. Abortion**

In every human reality and life here on earth, we are undoubtedly aware that nothing happens without reasons. Therefore, borrowing such a reflection in our peculiar context, Abortion, and most interestingly induced abortion as the common one, is performed and promoted for various causes which we are about to enumerate and explain in few words. Following Valentino in his research about the causes of abortion, he stresses the following statements:

“The reasons for terminating a pregnancy are very diverse. Most of the studies which have looked into these causes have shown that unwantedness of a pregnancy is the main reason. A pregnancy may not be accepted/wanted because it is conceived at an inappropriate time in the women's/couple's life (lives)... It may also result from unacceptable or prohibited sexual union. At other times it may occur when the

woman/couple has had the number of children they desire and/or can cater for adequately, or may be financially or otherwise constrained to have another one. An unwanted pregnancy can also result from a failure of contraception.”<sup>38</sup>

In the light of what has just been stressed by Valentino, we would like to enumerate some possible causes which we consider being at the center of practicing induced abortion.

#### ***2.3.1.1. Medical causes***

These are causes related to the woman’s health whereby due to practicing induced abortion she manifests some symptoms like losing weight, having a poor health, lack of appetite when it comes to eating, vomiting, and so forth. In this way, we may emphasize that all these consequences result from some causes impacting upon the woman’s health as being of a medical character (Chromosomal, mechanical, metabolic or vascular)<sup>39</sup>. Apart from this, abortion can be responsible for some dangerous diseases like STI known as Sexual Transmissible Infections, Cancer, Syphilis and Gonorrhoea.

#### ***2.3.1.2. Socio- economic Causes***

These are also quite challenging since they end up breaking the strong relationship of the woman with the society. Here the woman or the young lady is considered as having lost the dignity that she used to deserve; she therefore feels like being forsaken and hated by the rest of the members in the society since she is perceived as having committed an abominable act that goes against the social rules with regard to respect for life. At this very point loneliness becomes a very serious fact that disturbs her too

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<sup>38</sup> Valentino, *A Review of Abortion in Kenya*, 14.

<sup>39</sup> From a French Article, « Les Complications des Avortements », 2014, DR Congo.

much. Related to this are the other factors of poverty, unemployment, denial of the pregnancy by the man or boy supposed to be held responsible, wars, incest, rape, antipathy towards children and so forth. Needless to say, coming back to the issue of poverty and unemployment, many women or couples do opt for abortion once they notice that life becomes unbearable for them or her to fulfil all the required conditions for survival. Still in the same perspective, Henri Okullu gives other reasons for couples or women to perform induced abortions in the following words:

“In some cases the pregnancy could result from rape, incestuous unions or in socially and psychologically disturbed persons. In other instances, legitimate pregnancy may not be wanted because someone feels that the child would not live a normal life. If a woman was seriously ill during pregnancy, her child may be born with a physical or mental deformity. She may desire an abortion to avoid such a possibility. A woman also seeks an abortion if her education or career is in jeopardy, if she lacks money to bring up the child, if she fears losing personal freedom or if she wants to wipe off the stigma of her sexual misconduct.”<sup>40</sup>

Next to the factor of poverty, there is that of rape and incestuous unions which Henri has just extensively developed, whereby these are two events that seriously disturb women’s psychology be it done willingly or unwillingly. In addition, if we talk a bit of Incest itself, we will realize that it is an abomination in the sight of the African tradition. Therefore, a pregnant woman or a young girl who undergoes such a situation finds herself into trouble and since the unwanted pregnancy disturbs her a lot by also hindering her to move forward for instance in her studies or her job, she deliberately decides to abort also because of lacking proper and credible people who could have

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<sup>40</sup> Henri O., *Church and Marriage in East Africa*, 52.

come to her help through some advices. On his side, applying this case to the adolescents, Valentino tries to insinuate the following situation with regard to abortion as follows:

“...The girls conceive while single, still in school and dependent on their parents/guardians; at times they aren't even sure of the father of the child. They are not ready for motherhood, as that would mean losing out on many life opportunities such as education, jobs, marriage; also they fear retribution and rebuke by the family and society as a whole. Though a few of these girls do carry the pregnancy to term and deliver, it is presumed that a good proportion terminate them to remedy the already awry situation.”<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, abortion is not only a case restricted to poor people, but also to rich ones whereby, due to their desire of maintaining their means of survival, they decide to avoid every possibility of increasing the number of children in their families since for them only riches matter a lot.

### ***2.3.1.3. Psychological and moral Causes***

Once felt abandoned she becomes solitary and starts thinking of every possible means to rid from her pregnancy which she considers as being the major cause of her loss of affection and consideration by the society. This affects then her psychology whereby she is no longer stable, if not troubled to the point of being so traumatized. Then from the abandonment she reaches the level of undermining the moral principle that calls human beings to do good and avoid evil. Her freedom and conscious incite her to bypass

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<sup>41</sup> Valentino, *A Review of Abortion in Kenya*, 41.

it and she ends up adhering to abortion which considers as a means through which she will regain all her dignity and will be enabled to restart all her activities.

#### ***2.3.1.4. Political Causes***

This one is a result of the government's effort to legalize abortion in order to reduce the rate of birth in the country, having in mind that the statistic of the inhabitants has gone beyond the country's potentialities. In this way, once legalized, pro-abortionists fearlessly and freely promote induced abortion since it is thoroughly supported and promoted by the government. There are countries whereby for instance the women or ladies who commit abortion are rewarded with a certain amount of money; this is a particular case of my neighboring country Rwanda whereby, in order to reduce the huge rate of births therein, president Paul Kagame limited the number of kids in various families to the extent of encouraging abortion through awarding those practicing it. This obviously goes against the Rwandese culture which praises life, by then sacrificed for the benefit of keeping the country's rules. Evelyn Opondo through her research on the same issue stresses that in the Rwandese penal code it is stipulated the following statement: "Although revisions to the penal code are a step in the right direction – affirming the importance of a woman's access to safe and legal abortion – it is clear that more needs to be done. Women of all ages must be empowered to make their choices, unimpeded."<sup>42</sup> Thus for the political leaders, the potentialities of the country in terms of economics matter a lot, together with enough space to keep the inhabitants.

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/oped/comment/Rwanda-takes-a-giant-step-on-abortion/434750-4812160-m3ucaw/index.html>

With respect to all these various causes, we perceive that abortion as such is not performed without any possible motivation which unfortunately leads to dangerous damages and corruption of the woman's life and even undermines her consideration into the society.

#### ***2.3.1.5. Spiritual causes***

This is a result of the weight of loneliness on the side of the one procuring abortion. Once abandoned, she therefore concludes that life has lost sense, fact which incites her to get disappointed in God. Such a situation leads the lowering of the level of a prayerful life since there is no hope of healing from that psychological fact which keeps on disturbing her peace of mind and heart. With this I would like to emphasize the fact that once the guilty woman or the ones encouraging her for procuring abortion lack that consciousness of letting herself or themselves being accompanied spiritually by some credible people to assist them on how to discern more over the act, they or she will end up doing anything evil by claiming that it is out of her of free will and previous knowledge. After these causes, what comes next is to look upon some major side effects that result from procuring abortion. These either death or infertility, loss of weight whereby the woman or the girl has a very poor health conditions and traumatism as associated with the psychological troubles. At this very point we may talk of Anne Speckhard who gives us some signs of the psychological side effects of Abortion as follows: "The majority of research concerning stressful outcomes of abortion has conceptualized this stress in terms of psychological reactions which contain cognitive, emotional, and behavioral elements. Emotional Reactions to Abortion, Guilt,

Depression and Emotional Numbness.”<sup>43</sup> However, our main focus will be upon the issue of Infertility as an unnatural consequence of procuring abortion.

### **2.3.2. Infertility: Its Causes and Effects**

Being one of the most notorious consequences of induced Abortion, Infertility in its turn is perceived in the African Context as having some effects over both the male and female individuals, but mostly on the female creature since all the burden of it falls upon her shoulder. With regard to Infertility, we may say that it is just caused by some facts, but most particularly in our case, by the excessive and abusive practice of abortion. This becomes visible after various investigations and examinations in different hospitals, but at the same time the concerned individuals are usually aware of it depending on their past. Infertility is mostly noticed once the lady or the woman is already living with a man, and when it happens that she has not been able to conceive after like 3 months or even 1 to two years, this becomes questionable and marks the beginning of investigations especially on the side of the woman since as said earlier, we are mostly dealing here with that issue from the female perspective. Uka gives the main reason with regard to applying the issue most especially to the woman, in the following words: “Although the problems are traceable to either party, it seems that the women bear the heavier brunt of the blame for childlessness, especially in the African context. This is due to the fact women are the channels through which children are born.”<sup>44</sup> In line with the same context, according to Uka: “In traditional African societies, infertility is nearly always attributed to an attack of witchcraft on the woman...In traditional societies, therefore, barrenness leads women through all sorts

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<sup>43</sup> Spekhard A., *Psycho- Social Stress following Abortion*, 3-7.

<sup>44</sup> UKA E.M., “The African Family and Issues of Women’s Infertility”, 193.

of ordeals such as being ridiculed in society and offering sacrifices to different deities whom they believe are the cause of their problem.”<sup>45</sup> Tackling the modern approach in contrast to the traditional one, Uka perceives that: “Infertility in modern times is seen to a large extent as a public health problem. Studies in medical science have shown possible causes and treatment for infertility. Some of the causes among the women are pelvic inflammatory disease, repeated abortion...” In the light of the above statements and since we are very much focused over dealing with the issue from the moral perspective, we may say that Infertility is a result of excessive abortion rather than being linked to a natural phenomenon, which is being naturally born as such. It is rather considered as something which an individual, especially the woman brings to herself through her free and deliberate consent to opt for abortion, bearing in mind that it is a sure means by which she will safeguard herself in the community with all that is related to her personality. In fact, while referring to the African belief in the sacredness of life and in the greatness of marriage through procreation, those or the one who is found unproductive is very much undermined in the society since in Africa everything is first and foremost about life; people need to exist before other things follow; thus, when the case of childlessness is noticed on one side between married couple, it becomes as a taboo, or better to say, a curse. This leads to various decisions taken by the elders with regard to either the concerned couple or mostly the woman who has been found infertile. This is due to a kind of disproportionate consideration of such an issue when it comes to apply it to both man and woman. With regard to Induced abortion, Infertility as being not an innate fact, but rather something which results from a peculiar act, has

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<sup>45</sup> UKA E.M., “The African Family and Issues of Women’s Infertility”, 192.

some effective influences over the female creatures in the following perspectives: They might be either social, psychological, or social and economic.

From the social point of view it is asserted that once a woman is judged unproductive or childless, the African community immediately thinks of isolating her since she is perceived as being useless to the society in terms of transgressing the rule or the procreative law of perpetuating successive generations. Such a stressing situation leads to either separation or divorce as well as the recourse to some scientific practices such as In Vitro Fertilization in order to keep her marriage standard.

As asserted by Uka: “In Africa, a married woman who doesn’t produce children feels very miserable. The agonies of being childless are so immense that the woman stops at nothing to help herself bear children.”<sup>46</sup> While stressing the African conception of a family with regard to marriage, procreation and childlessness as a religious problem, Uka states the following argument:

“Having children is considered to be the supreme reason for marriage in Africa. Most African myths of creation point to the fact that God created men and women and bid them go into the world and multiply. Procreation therefore becomes a mark of God’s favor on marriage. Hence, among Africans, no marriage ceremony is concluded without a request to God and the ancestors to let the new couple bear many children. Hence every newly married couple look forward to having a child or children shortly after nine months of marriage, believing that they extend their life and immortalize their names especially through their male children. Children are the glory of marriage and in most African societies with a rural agricultural base, having many children is a highly prized achievement...Given this background in which the success, the prestige,

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<sup>46</sup> UKA E.M., “The African Family and Issues of Women’s Infertility”, 189.

the joy, the glory, the dignity, the goodness, the consolation, the insurance and practically all that is good in life is attributed to having children, surely not to have children in such an environment is to be in hell while on earth.”<sup>47</sup>

In addition, once isolated and blamed for every kind of evil, if it happens that she passes on, she doesn't deserve any kind of a worthy burial. It is convenient to add that such kind of mistreatment or isolation might be responsible for divorce or separation, a fact that pushes man to marry another woman. Next to such inconveniences, Uka mentions other ones as follows:

“Defects and disabilities in child-bearing cause hardship and discomfort to those afflicted, where a very high premium is placed on child-bearing. Infertility constitutes a reproach and a great strain on the emotional, spiritual and physical balance of the woman so affected... As a remedy some of these women lapse into excessive drinking of alcohol. It leads others to sleeplessness, drug addiction, excessive smoking and loss of weight.”<sup>48</sup>

In the same way, in their fervent desire to prove the harm of Infertility especially on the woman's side, both Opuku and Mbiti explicitly affirm the following ideas:

“The inability to produce offspring is considered one of the greatest misfortunes in African societies. Barrenness, sterility and the unmarried state are threats to human existence and are therefore condemned by many West African societies. So serious is this calamity that in some African societies childless people cannot become ancestors after death.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> UKA E.M., “The African Family and Issues of Women's Infertility”, 190-191.

<sup>48</sup> UKA E.M., “The African Family and Issues of Women's Infertility”, 196.

<sup>49</sup> OPUKU, “West African Traditional Religion, 125-126.

In its turn, Mbiti says: "...It is a very tragic thing when no children come out of a marriage. The people do not consider it to be truly a marriage, and other arrangements are made to obtain children."<sup>50</sup> This being the case, the woman or the young female creature becomes psychologically troubled to the extent of losing the meaning of life. Thus, the phenomenon of the psychological trauma whereby the concerned subject is no longer able to reflect properly. In support to such a situation Melina and Anderson say that: "The psychological aftermath of abortion for women, men, children, and families can be devastating, leaving scars which last a lifetime for the persons involved and for all society..."<sup>51</sup> Of course such a moment is not easy for her to endure, but at the same time allows her to recall all the abortions that she performed in the past years, and thereafter facing the consequences of it, if at all she is deeply sorry for it and conscious about it. At this point, Abortion not only makes her lose her marital privilege, but mostly jeopardizes her whole life as a worthy being who deserves respect at the same title as man in the society. While still facing such troubles, the female creature experiences what we call "physical abuse" whereby she is no longer estimated by the community members and as matter of fact she no longer deserves respect and should be treated as not a mere human being but rather as a useless being. With time this kind of treatment might lead her to committing suicide due to her loneliness whereby she is helpless in the society. Connected to this is also the issue of finance whereby once the woman is repudiated or chased away from her husband's house first and afterwards from the whole society, she becomes helpless in terms of maintaining herself into life. She is really forsaken to the point that she faces domestic violence and extreme

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<sup>50</sup> Mbiti J., "Introduction to African Religion, 104-105.

<sup>51</sup> Melina L. and Anderson C., *Oil on the Wounds: A contemporary examination of the Effects of Divorce and Abortion on Children and their Families*, 203.

deprivation of everything necessary for her to survive. Apart from these above-mentioned effects, with Melina and Anderson we may add the following effects: “It is also important to recognize the number of symptoms that may come up within the woman even some time after the abortion: emotional disturbances (anxiety, etc.), communication problems, eating disorders, relational problems, sleep difficulties, etc. The trauma of the loss of a child can change one’s attitudes, emotional behaviors and affective life with the partner...”<sup>52</sup> Related to this is the experience recorded by Susan Kentish while qualifying the psychological trouble as being the “daily agony”<sup>53</sup>, refers to a certain woman by the name of Yvonne after adhering to abortion for several times. She says:

“To wake every day knowing that you have killed another human being is the daily hell that faces every person involved in the network of abortion sewers... If you have had anybody close to you die then you’ll know that what I mean when I say it’s like that-regretting, too late, the things you didn’t do or in my case, the things you did do, and knowing however much you may wish, that is too late...”<sup>54</sup>

All these various consequences which we have talked of so far are really influential upon the woman’s life in all perspectives. This is because those who practice abortion never dedicate more time of discernment over such an act before passing to its practical. At the very beginning they consider it as being normal and therefore a ways through they will regain their freedom and other goods, but at the end of time they come to notice that they have gone wrong. Hence, these above-mentioned consequences are of

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<sup>52</sup> Melina L. and Anderson C., *Oil on the Wounds: A contemporary examination of the Effects of Divorce and Abortion on Children and their Families*, 169-170.

<sup>53</sup> Kentish S., *Babies for burning*, 153.

<sup>54</sup> Kentish S., *Babies for burning*, 153; 164.

a great prominence since they teach those who really feel sorry for such an evil practice which is seen as being both a crime and a sin. With respect to all these effects, it goes without saying that, there is a deep need for the female creature to know how to position herself in regard to the issue of unnatural infertility since even when it is natural, the African society still condemns it by perceiving it as being abnormal, unconceivable and therefore a result of a curse laid over either the couple or the female herself, and then for it to end, there is a need of purification through rites. However, since we are more interested in the moral evaluation of Infertility, the issue of ritual performances is not our main concern. That is why in the upcoming part of the work we will end up talking of some practical guidelines or solutions which can help all those female victims of induced abortion and infertility to come out of those challenging facts such that they may start anew. For the time being our main concern is to inquire about the way those two phenomena are grasped in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

### **3. Conclusion**

Ever since we began this part, we were dealing with the moral approach of Infertility as connected with Abortion first and foremost from the traditional African understanding, and thereafter from the specific understanding of both issues and their effects over the Congolese female citizens. We went on saying that Abortion as long as long it keeps being either induced or deliberately willed, leads to various consequences, among which we retained Infertility, which is also a challenging issue that is held responsible for many marriages breaking down and lack of faithfulness to marriage commitments or promises. In the same way, we tried to know that life is so precious not only in the African tradition, but also in the sight of God its giver. Thus, in Africa, respect and consideration for both man and woman in a marriage relationship are

motivated by their ability to procreate. Then, in case one of both partners is proven unable to procreate, this is like a scandal or better to say, an abominable fact whose origin should be found out since it might lead to the couple's or one's isolation from the society and as a matter they or he/ she'll be deprived of all the necessary as first and foremost a human person, and above all an active community member. We also learned that both Abortion and Infertility originate from ex-nihilo, but rather are caused by various facts which in their turn have some effective impacts or influences on the victims. In this regard, we talked of the human person's whole transformation in all perspectives such moral, social, economic, spiritual as well as psychological. Reaching then the core of this part, we came to understand that Abortion and Infertility are also part of things which lead many Congolese female citizens to lose their consideration into the society and all the chances to either get married or complete their studies for a better future. Congo as an African country with its proper culture has never approved nor promoted Abortion as either a legal or a moral practice since it stipulates that it is evil and therefore any attempt to it should be punished for some years into prison. The same applies to everything that emanates from Abortion itself, though people do it discretely, depending on their conscience, free will and freedom, and yet it remains condemned as endangering many lives especially of the Congolese youth. With regard to the causes of abortion in DR Congo/ Kinshasa, we said that, many abortions are due to many women and girls inability to cope with life issues since most of them are unemployed, and therefore, once they have involved into regularly sexual intercourses, it becomes easier and irreproachable for them to abort, so that they may quietly continue their jobs. Others practice abortion because of unwanted or unplanned pregnancies which are a result of either rape, incest or early age. And so long they keep doing so, they sometimes forget that such kind of practice doesn't go without consequences

which will be manifesting themselves in the future, if at all abortion doesn't terminate their lives. That is why at the end we tried to mention Infertility as one of the most notorious effects of abortion, and is responsible for many corruption and deviations into marriages to the point of jeopardizing the moral behavior of many Congolese women and girls between 16-25 years old.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

# **THE CHURCH'S UNDERTANDING OF THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN LIFE WITH REGARD TO THE EFFECTS OF ABORTION AND INFERTILITY**

### **3.0. Introduction**

The result of our personal investigation in matters that regard both procured abortion and infertility has been that two of them are a very serious and considerable threat to human life since they contradict the divine and the natural law as far as the sacredness and respect for life are concerned. That is why in the present part we would like to talk more over the origin, the importance and the dignity of human life as contrasted to the two moral issues which challenge all the values which are pertaining to the respect owed to human life. At this very point we would like to start making an approach about what the Bible tells us in its conception and understanding of both human life and all that threatens it.

### **3.1. Biblical Understanding of Human Life as opposed to Abortion**

In this very brief part, there is no direct evidence for us to talk of the word “abortion” in the Bible, if not that there are some passages which directly or indirectly mention it in other words. Before any other biblical references, the most helpful one is found in Genesis 1 and 2 whereby we are told of the human being to have been created in God’s

image and likeness. Additionally, we are also told for instance of considering the beginning of human life in the womb at fertilization in Genesis 16:11; 25:21-26, Psalms 51:5, Luke 1:35-36. Elsewhere there are some other biblical passages which tell us about acknowledging that any attempt to sacrifice an innocent life for no valid reason is punishable by God since He is the first and ultimate author of life; he himself knows us even before we are conceived and knows destiny by virtue of having his purpose over each and every one of us. Next to this is the assumption that Children are a gift from God. Thus, any attempt to ending innocent life is evil in God's sight since it jeopardizes his plan over those victims of abortion. This can be found in Judges 13: 3-7, Jeremiah 1:4-5, Exodus 21:22-25, Ezekiel 16:20-21, Genesis 30:1-2 and Psalms 127:3-6. Out of these scriptural passages, Brian Clowes delivers the following summary: "God creates us, body and soul, in His own image. God has known us as persons since before we were even conceived. God has a plan for each one of us and values everyone. It is a sin to interfere with the plans of God. Children are a gift from God. Children are the most innocent among us. It is heinous to slay the innocent."<sup>55</sup>

On the indirect evidence of abortion in the Bible, the same author says: "It is absolutely true that the Bible does not mention the word "abortion". However, just because the Bible does not contain the word "abortion" does not mean that it does not condemn it indirectly."<sup>56</sup> In any case, the main and strong biblical statement upon which I can rely in the process of trying to look for the evidences which may help human beings to understand the biblical teaching about human life, is in the book of Exodus 20:13

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<sup>55</sup>Clowes B., *The Facts of Life*, 207.

<sup>56</sup>Clowes B., *The Facts of Life*, 205.

whereby we are forbidden to kill. Through this biblical statement which is known as the fifth Commandment as God conveyed the Decalogue to Moses as a code of conduct to the people of Israel, a conclusion from this is that moral and Christian beings are taught to acknowledge their duty to strive for anything that can be harmful towards human life as the primordial value since it God's gift to them, and therefore should remain inviolable. Otherwise, the contrary to that would just be a mere violation of the divine law as instituted and sealed into human heart according to God's intend.

Having said that, since abortion is condemned by the Bible through the various passages given above, the same is applied to Infertility as that which results from procured abortion due to the fact that it is linked to abortion and is different from natural infertility. Taken like this, both abortion and infertility contradict God's command to mankind to be fruitful and fill the world through procreation as recorded in the book of Genesis 1: 26.

### **3.2. The Early and Contemporary Christian Church and Abortion**

After getting some reliable evidences from the Bible, here present, we would like to look for some other evidences from some helpful early Christian writers with their documents which condemn procured abortion. These are the Didache, Epistles to Barnabas, Tertullian in his book entitled "Apologeticus", Athenagoras of Athens, Saint Augustine in *De Nuptius et Concupiscus* (On Marriage and Concupiscence), saint Jerome in "Letter to Eustochium, and lastly Trullian.

Through their work, all this authors wanted to show their firm reliance upon Scriptures with respect to its promotion of human life as God's free gift to humanity, and to the condemnation of any kind of practice which would prevent life from keeping its original

essence in God. While it is said for instance in the Didache that: “You shall not kill an unborn child or murder a new infant”<sup>57</sup>, the same is affirmed in the Epistle to Barnabas as follows: “You shall love your neighbor more than your own life. You shall not slay the child by abortion.”<sup>58</sup> In the same way, Tertullian says: “For us Christians, murder is once and for all forbidden; so even the child in the womb, while yet the mother’s blood is still being drawn on to form the human being, it is not lawful for us to destroy. To forbid birth is only quicker murder...”<sup>59</sup> Once again quoted by Norman: “But to us, manslaying having once been forbidden, it is not lawful to undo even what is conceived in the womb, while the blood is as yet undetermined to form a man. Prevention of birth is a precipitation of murder.”<sup>60</sup> Up to this level, it follows that promoting human life and its dignity is not just something we may hear about in our today’s era, but rather a task which was initiated many years ago in the light of its biblical roots as mentioned previously. No one has the right to end human life, unless God decides so since he is both the giver and has power to take it back. Therefore, pro-abortionists could find their condemnation by promoting procured abortion since it goes against God’s will and eternal law from which natural law finds its meaning. On the same note, while talking of abortion and its consequences though in different writings, both saint Augustine and saint Jerome also condemn abortion by urging people, especially married couples to be heralds of life. Saint Augustine attests: “Sometimes this lustful cruelty or cruel lust goes so far as to seek to procure baneful sterility, and if this fails the fetus conceived in the womb is in one way or another smothered or evacuated, in the desire to destroy the

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<sup>57</sup> *The Didache*, II, 2.

<sup>58</sup> *Epistle to Barnabas*, Volume II, 19.

<sup>59</sup> Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 9.

<sup>60</sup> Tertullian quoted by Stevas N., *The Right to Life*,30.

offspring before it has life, or if it already lives in the womb, to kill it before it is born.”<sup>61</sup> In his turn saint Jerome says: “Some virgins (unmarried women), when they learn they are with child through sin, practice abortion by the use of drugs. Frequently they die themselves and are brought before the ruler of the lower world guilty of three crimes; suicide, adultery against Christ, and murder of an unborn child.”<sup>62</sup> And with regard to the condemnation of procured abortion Basil the Great says that, “the hairsplitting difference between formed and unformed makes no difference in us. Whoever deliberately commits abortion is subject to the penalty for homicide.”<sup>63</sup> In his desire to address pro-abortionists and those who receive the so called care from them, Trullian says: “Those who give drugs for procuring abortion, and those who receive poisons to kill the foetus, are subjected to the penalty for murder.”<sup>64</sup>

In the light of all these statements I may deduce that, there is anything evil that can remain unpunishable as long as it challenges God’s will and plan over the human being, and at the same time challenges the society as well as marriage life.

### **3.3. According to Vatican II**

Through its pastoral Constitution known as “*Gaudium et Spes*”, the Church tried give its emphasis over the dignity of human life and respect for marriage love as follows:

“ The Council realized that married people are often hindered by certain situations in modern life from working out their married love harmoniously and that they can

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<sup>61</sup> Saint Augustine, *De Nuptius et Concupiscus* (On Marriage and Concupiscence), 1 and 17.

<sup>62</sup> Saint Jerome, *Letter to Eustochium*, 22.13.

<sup>63</sup> Saint Basile the Great, *First Canonical Letter*, vol III, 20-23.

<sup>64</sup> Trullian, *Council* (692), *Canons*, 91.

sometimes find themselves in a position where the number of children cannot be increased...Some of the proposed solutions to these problems are shameful and some people have not hesitated to suggest the taking of life: the Church wishes to emphasize that there can be no conflict between the divine laws governing the transmission of life and the fostering of authentic married love. 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.”<sup>65</sup>

### **3.4. According to the Magisterium and some Papal Documents**

Apart from the magisterial teaching of the Church with regard to the issue of abortion as an objective mortal sin, several documents got written by various popes in different periods in order to bring their contribution to the issue of abortion and the reminder which regards the dignity of human life. Among them let us mention some.

According to *Dignitatis Personae*:

“The dignity of a person must be recognized in every human being from conception to natural death. This fundamental principle expresses *a great “yes” to human life* and must be at the center of ethical reflection on biomedical research, which has an ever greater importance in today’s world... Respect for that dignity is owed to every human being because each one carries in an indelible way his own dignity and value.”<sup>66</sup>

Therefore as attested by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in *Donum Vitae*:

“The gift of life which God the Creator and Father has entrusted to man calls him to appreciate the inestimable value of what he has been given and to take responsibility

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<sup>65</sup> Church Document, *Vatican II*: Dogmatic Constitution “*Gaudium et Spes*”, N<sup>o</sup> 51.

<sup>66</sup> *Dignitatis Personae*, N<sup>o</sup> 1 and 6.

for it: this fundamental principle must be placed at the centre of one's reflection in order to clarify and solve the moral problems raised by artificial interventions on life as it originates and on the processes of procreation...The inviolability of the innocent human being's right to life "from the moment of conception until death" (14) is a sign and requirement of the very inviolability of the person to whom the Creator has given the gift of life. By comparison with the transmission of other forms of life in the universe, the transmission of human life has a special character of its own, which derives from the special nature of the human person. "The transmission of human life is entrusted by nature to a personal and conscious act and as such is subject to the all-holy laws of God: immutable and inviolable laws which must be recognized and observed. For this reason one cannot use means and follow methods which could be licit in the transmission of the life of plants and animals"... From the moment of conception, the life of every human being is to be respected in an absolute way because man is the only creature on earth that God has "wished for himself " (16) and the spiritual soul of each man is "immediately created" by God; (17) his whole being bears the image of the Creator. Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves "the creative action of God" (18) and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end.(19) God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being."<sup>67</sup>

In the same line, saying that Procured Abortion is morally evil, Saint pope Paul VI adds that it also contradicts the unitive and procreative characters in marriage, of which we are told in the church document of Pope Paul VI, "Humanae Vitae". As asserted by him in the latter document with regard to marriage life: " This particular doctrine, often

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<sup>67</sup>Pope Benedict XVI, *D.V.*, 1; 3.

expounded by the magisterium of the Church, is based on the inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act.”<sup>68</sup> In the desire of preserving human dignity and life as such, respect should therefore be given to the woman since she too is creature of God, enjoying the same privilege at the same level as man does. Henceforth, since we are trying to defend human dignity as related to life and a divine gift which can never be destroyed at any cost, Paul VI continues to instruct us that: “Also noteworthy is a new understanding of the dignity of woman and her place in society, of the value of conjugal love in marriage and the relationship of conjugal acts to this love.”<sup>69</sup> Elsewhere, within its intention of condemning any deliberate murder of an innocent life as contrary to God’s loving purpose, *Donum Vitae* says: “Human 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.”<sup>70</sup>

### **3.5. According to the Code of Canon Law**

This is all about some penalties which the Church thought of in order to eradicate the abortion case and all that it is associated with it. Canon 1398 is the most specific and explicit one about the issue of Abortion whereby the following words are said in these terms: “A person who procures a successful abortion incurs an automatic (*latae*

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<sup>68</sup> Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, N<sup>o</sup> 12.

<sup>69</sup> Paul VI, *H. V.*, N<sup>o</sup> 2.

<sup>70</sup> Benedict XVI, *D. V.*, N<sup>o</sup> 1.

*sententiae*) excommunication.”<sup>71</sup> In order to conquer with the Code’s content, Clowes Brian says that some church leaders like pope Sixtus V condemned “abortion with great severity”<sup>72</sup> in his Bull entitled “Constitutio Effraenatum”. “A century later, Innocent XI rejected the propositions of certain lax canonists who sought to excuse an abortion procured before the moment accepted by some as the moment of the Spiritual animation of the new being.”<sup>73</sup> Slowly by slowly in its fervent desire to preserve and promote the dignity of human life, Brian Clowes shows that the Church ended up thinking of some possible penalties applied to those participating into Abortion as follows: “The Church not only does not want to change its teaching on abortion, it absolutely cannot, because this crucial issue deals with fundamental questions that derive from the natural law.”<sup>74</sup> However as stressed by Brian Clowes, the Church validates such a penalty under three relevant conditions which are: “They must know that abortion is a mortal sin... The woman and those who cooperate in the abortion must know suspect she is pregnant... If a woman knows a method is abortifacient and uses it anyway, she risks excommunication. The woman must freely choose abortion...”<sup>75</sup> In order then to avoid such a penalty, some directives are given in terms of advices whereby Christians Catholics should be very much keen and sensitive towards adhering to any suggestion which disorients them from respecting human life. They should therefore oppose and resist any attempt of cooperating into abortion or the use of abortifacient to terminate

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<sup>71</sup> Code of Canon Law, Latin- English Edition (1983).

<sup>72</sup> Clowes B., *The Facts of Life*, 213.

<sup>73</sup> Clowes B., *The Facts of Life*, 213.

<sup>74</sup> Clowes B., *The Facts of Life*, 220.

<sup>75</sup> Clowes B., *The Facts of Life*, 220-221.

human life. This is due to the reminder given to Christians by Saint Pope John Paul II in “*Evangelium Vitae*”, that, apart from the use of right conscience and freedom in the desire to strive against all harmful situations towards human life:

“Absolute respect for every innocent human life also requires the exercise conscientious objection in relation to procured abortion and euthanasia. “Causing death” can never be considered a form of medical treatment, even when the intention is solely to comply with the patient’s request. Rather, it runs completely counter to the health-care profession, which is meant to be an impassioned and unflinching affirmation of life.”<sup>76</sup>

In the same line, in order to justify the theological foundation of the right to life, Norman Stevas adds that “The value of human life for the Christian in the first century A.D., as today, rested not on its development of a superior sentience but on the unique character of the union of body and soul, both destined for eternal life. ... The Hippocratic Oath, which dates back to the fifth century B.C., contains an explicit repudiation of abortion...”<sup>77</sup> So far we can affirm the considerable relevance of appreciating human dignity as related to life as a divine gift which should never be destroyed as it is observed within the case of procured abortion. Once performed, procured abortion leads to a certain loss of respect towards God as well as for the life itself of which he is the first and ultimate Master. Its respect and protection should therefore make visible the eternal destiny as the essence of the Christian Church teaching. Elsewhere as quoted by Norman, Blackstone defines life as “the immediate gift of God,

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<sup>76</sup> Saint Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, n<sup>o</sup> 89.

<sup>77</sup> Stevas N., *The Right to Life*, 12; 30.

a right inherent by nature in every individual and it begins in contemplation of law as soon as the infant is able to stir in the mother's womb."<sup>78</sup>

In the light of all these above-mentioned statements from several and various sources, we understand that any kind of evil practices such as abortion of which unnatural infertility is a result, do contradict God's purpose for humanity, which is of preserving life from any kind of hindrances, such that it may be had into abundance. This being the case, respect for human life and its dignity remains the fundamental task of every human being, and above all, of every Christian believer.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

With regard to all that we have said as far as the relevance and the dignity of human life is concerned, it goes without saying that life as God's gift is part of man's responsibility and duties to be preserved from any threat which can make it lose its respect since it is known to be sacred.

The above statement associated with the previous ones show that it is of the responsibility of each Christian and moral being to strive against anything that can destroy human life like it is the case for procured abortion and all that it entails. They are responses against the arguments of pro-abortionists and at the same time an invitation for us to be heralds of life through promoting its importance, respect and dignity. As a matter of fact, as long as God remains the first and ultimate Master of life, no one could give him or herself the power to end it, if not God alone who gives it and has power to take it back at a proper time. To render this more explicit we may conquer with Lewis Smedes as quoted by Robert Barry as follows:

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<sup>78</sup> Blackstone quoted by Stevas N., *The Right to Life*, 31.

“... He contends that innocent human life is inviolable because it possesses sanctity, and while he admits that sacredness is difficult to define, he sees it as a holy specialness that signals people to stand back. This sanctity derives from the fact that the person was created out of love by God and is prized especially by God... only God has the authority to take innocent human life, and to willfully destroy this life is to challenge God’s authority. Our responsibility to human life is to protect and nourish it but not assault it. God gave us life as a gift and we should demonstrate our reverence for this treasure by not destroying it.”<sup>79</sup>

In line with this, should we conclude that our desire to protect life by respecting it and preventing it from any kind of hindrance since it is God’s gift, is rooted once more in the fact that human beings bear within themselves what we call the divine image, and as a matter of fact, life should never be violated or threatened by any evil practice as we are mentioning the case of procured abortion with some of its inconveniences among which the major one according to the present context, is Infertility. In the same way the pope john center states by reminding us that: “Human life is at once a gift and a responsibility-a gift, because man could never create himself; a responsibility because man must use this gift properly. God, Life itself, is the source of all other life and to Him alone, therefore, belongs every power over it.”<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Smedes L., quoted by Barry R., *The Sanctity of Human Life and its Protection*, 9.

<sup>80</sup> The Pope John Center, *Conserving Human Life*,3.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**MORAL RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**ON HOW TO ERADICATE BOTH ABORTION**  
**AND INFERTILITY**

**4.0. Introduction**

In the present part we would like to think of some possible and helpful moral recommendations which can enable Christian moral agents to strive against procured abortion and infertility in reference to their causes and consequences over especially female victims and married couples. Thus, the aim of this investigation is to look for all possible means through which human life can continue being valued no matter how some difficult situations of life often challenge human beings. In the process of entering into the detail of our subject matter we will start talking of those estimable solutions from a general perspective such that we may end up applying them to the Congolese context since this very peculiar country has also been affected by the same challenge.

Apparently, there are various means through which we may eradicate both procured abortion and infertility, but in any case, we are going to talk about those that we found very crucial from the moral point of view and as far as human life and its dignity are concerned. We will start with saying something about the morality of human sexuality, the practice of virtues and the Evangelical counsel of Chastity, the Napro Technology

Theory, the notion on the formation of Conscience, Culture of responsible parenthood and lastly the State legal process with regard to the issue of procured abortion.

#### **4.1. Catechesis on the morality of human sexuality**

The main purpose of this point is to rethink more over the crucial consideration of the implication of human sexuality in the issue of abortion since we can never talk about abortion without referring to the fact that there ought to be sexual intercourse from which pregnancy results. Prior to Vatican II, the Catholic Church had to acknowledge the relevance of human sexuality as having the productive function leading towards biological goal. Thereafter, it went beyond the procreative purpose for the continuation by asserting that sexuality means a lot than what they thought of before. A very concise example with respect to this is perceived with the Pontifical Council for the family in its document which, in the process of associating love with human sexuality defines the latter as follows:

*“Human sexuality is thus a good, part of that created gift which God saw as being "very good", when he created the human person in his image and likeness, and "male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). Insofar as it is a way of relating and being open to others, sexuality has love as its intrinsic end, more precisely, love as donation and acceptance, love as giving and receiving. The relationship between a man and a woman is essentially a relationship of love: "Sexuality, oriented, elevated and integrated by love acquires truly human quality". When such love exists in marriage, self-giving expresses, through the body, the complementarity and totality of the gift.”*<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> The Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education within the Family*, N<sup>o</sup> 11.

On his side William E. May while trying to analyze the Vatican Declaration on Sexual Ethics recalls the following statement:

“The Declaration begins by recognizing that sexuality "must be considered as one of the factors which give to each individual's life the principal traits that distinguish it." Indeed, the document insists that It· Is from sex that the human person receives the characteristics Which, on the biological, psychological, and spiritual levels make that person a man or a woman, and thereby largely condition his or her Progress towards maturity and insertion into society" (emphasis added).<sup>9</sup> . . . From this it would appear that the Vatican Declaration, far from reducing sexuality to the level of a physical and biological phenomenon, insists from the very beginning on its human, personal and, Indeed, spiritual significance.”<sup>82</sup>

Through this point more emphasis is being put on acknowledging human sexuality as a divine gift from the very moment of creation, a vocation and a task to be undertaken by all Christians.

#### **4.1.1. Human sexuality as a Divine Gift**

What matters a lot here is to acknowledge that sexuality was planned in God's mind since the time of creation by virtue of his very commandment given to our first parents “to fruitful and to fill the world” as recorded in the book of Genesis 1...

Thus, sexuality as a gift is linked to man's privilege given by God who created him in his own image and likeness. In this way, “Sexuality as a gift is clearly first about something that human beings are before it is something that they do.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> May, William E. (1985) "The Vatican Declaration on Sexual Ethics and the Moral Methodology of Vatican Council II," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 52: No. 2, 117.

<sup>83</sup> Notes (2017-2018) from Sr. Dr. KABALA F., *Sexual Morality: Sexuality as a Gift*.

Through this procreative ordering by God we perceive the sacred character that sexuality as it is the same case applied to life. Therefore, much respect should be given to sexuality as not being a means through which two people of opposed sex meet just for sexual pleasure, if not for the purpose of communing in God's life with the procreative intention. To this corresponds the notion of responsibility in contrast to that of self-gratification while engaging into sexuality. Taken as such, God ever remains the first and ultimate author of sexuality since he is the one giving it to human beings with a very concise purpose. Destroying or giving it another meaning which is contrary to the one intended by God is like violating God's intention for human beings like destroying human life innocently through abortion is an aberration in the eyes of God.

Having said that, it follows that tackling the point which concerns the morality of human sexuality as a divine gift constitutes a kind of reminder to pro-abortionists and the female practicing it whereby they should bear in mind a certain consciousness towards the sacredness of life and sexuality which shouldn't be abused anyhow since it engages the whole human being and not just part of him or her. In order to render this more explicit Saint John Paul II affirms the personalistic meaning of human sexuality and its intrinsic tie with procreation. He therefore attests: "Sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is by no means something purely biological but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such".<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, N° 11.

#### **4.1.2. Human Sexuality as a Vocation**

This is by virtue of God's ordering to human beings to be procreative as a means for them to actively participate in God's creative project. As a matter of fact, each and every human being is called to acknowledge the influential reality of sexuality in his or her own life through experiencing it wisely as God wishes it to be than experiencing it in whichever way that contradicts God's purpose for the safety of the human gender. Another kind of reminder to the pro-abortionists is that, though sexuality is a human call by God, it shouldn't however be undermined by promoting any means that prevents human life from being praised through the existence of the fetus who with time ends up becoming a complete human being.

#### **4.1.3. Sexuality as a task to be undertaken**

This is just about calling all people of good will to acknowledge that it is of their responsibility to witness to the relevance and the true meaning of sexuality in people's Christian and moral life. This is because like any gift of God entrusted to humanity, "sexuality is ordered for a purpose and thus requires proper cultivation or development. This is where formation in human sexuality plays its most important role."<sup>85</sup>

Still in the same perspective, some possible requirements for sexuality to be understood as a task which needs to be undertaken in marriage life are enumerated as follows:

- “1) Forming a community of persons through conjugal love;
- 2) Serving life through procreation and education of children;

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<sup>85</sup> Notes from Sr. Dr. KABALA F., PMS, Sexual Morality: *Sexuality as a Task to be undertaken*.

3) Participating in the development of society;

4) Sharing in the life and mission of the Church.”<sup>86</sup>

What attracts our attention among the four elements is the second one which talks about serving life in the sense of overcoming every kind of immoral practices such as abortion, euthanasia, the use of contraceptives and other means that jeopardize man’s dignity with regard to life. On the same note, in order to emphasize this more John Owyer affirms that “Sexuality is inseparable from personal existence. This means that sexuality is not a distinct sector of life which can be isolated from the rest of our existence... Our sexuality is the means chosen by God to reveal the truth it is not good for the human being to be alone.”<sup>87</sup> In this way, we may sum up saying that it is a common call for every human being to make sure that sexuality is understood in its original sense since it is linked to our human nature and existence. By so doing we will be able to strive against any negative means that harms life together with human dignity.

#### **4.2. Practice of Virtues**

In this part we would to talk about some helpful virtues which are linked to human life and its dignity as contrasted to the practice of abortion and the rest of other evil practices. We therefore have the theological virtue of charity and the two cardinal virtues of prudence and temperance. Through this three virtues we will come to understand that as long as all Christians will acknowledge their relevance as guidelines

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<sup>86</sup> Notes from Sr. Dr. KABALA F., *Sexual Morality: Sexuality as a Task to be undertaken*.

<sup>87</sup> Owyer J., *Human Sexuality: A Christian View*, 18.

for them to keep the original character of human life and its dignity, they will be enabled not to side with the pro-abortionists, but rather with the pro-life people.

#### **4.2.1. The Virtue of Charity**

Known as one of the three theological virtues taught by the Church our Mother, the virtue of Charity is known as that which invites all believers to experience God's intimate love for humanity in the person of their neighbors.

As defined by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Virtue of Charity is known as "... the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God."<sup>88</sup> This virtue is rendered visible through particular acts among which we may specifically mention caring for other people's lives in various ways. At this very point we would like to mention that a true believe should never involve in ending people's lives through whichever means proposed to him or to her; otherwise this will just be a violation of the fifth commandment which forbids human beings not to kill. Once taken into account, let us end up saying that the virtue of charity should allow all Christians to perceive God's image and themselves into other people's existence, especially in the not yet born fetus who are on the way to become complete human beings.

#### **4.2.2. The Virtue of Prudence**

As part of the four cardinal virtues proposed to us Christians as guidelines for us to become more consistent and coherent in our actions, the virtue of prudence should help all people who are induced to abortion and those promoting it to come back to their senses by discerning more upon their own existence and the one God is intending to

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<sup>88</sup> CCC, N<sup>o</sup> 1822.

make visible through those fetus in their mother's wombs. As defined by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "Prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it; ..." <sup>89</sup> In fact here it is just an appeal for us to overcome every kind of a selfish attitude which overlooks other people's right to existence. Prudence therefore is required for all Christians to dedicate more time of discernment before performing any action by seeing whether it is according to God's patterns and will.

In summation, to this virtue we may also linked the important element of responsibility since all of us should be able to assume our responsibility in whichever act we perform without being pushed by anything or constrained by anybody, if not by the complete use of our reason, conscience and freedom.

#### **4.2.3. The Virtue of Temperance**

Once we will be able to experience God's charity in our daily Christian and moral life, the prudence that we will have before engaging into any action will enable us to accept our life conditions and not willing at any cost to gain that which we do not deserve.

As affirmed by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "Temperance is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the will's mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable."<sup>90</sup> Taken as such, the cardinal virtue of Temperance is that which will help us not to desire more than we can get according to our abilities because if we refer to the pro-abortionists, they just promote induced abortion for economic purposes both on the side of the specialists in the matter and the ones appointed to spread such a

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<sup>89</sup> CCC, N<sup>o</sup> 1806.

<sup>90</sup> CCC, N<sup>o</sup> 1809.

practice, and yet it is to the detriment of the poor women or young ladies and the innocent aborted creatures. Thus, it helps us on how to overcome any kind of evil thoughts through a very genuine discernment over the mastery of our instincts.

#### **4.2.4. The practice of Chastity**

This evangelical counsel has its prominent place within the issue of Abortion by the very fact it enables us to make a step forward in keeping ourselves pure before God through avoiding all kinds of impure thoughts. As defined by the Pontifical Council for the family:

Chastity is the joyous affirmation of someone who knows how to live self-giving, free from any form of self-centred slavery. This presupposes that the person has learnt how to accept other people, to relate with them, while respecting their dignity in diversity. The chaste person is not self-centred, not involved in selfish relationships with other people. Chastity makes the personality harmonious. It matures it and fills it with inner peace. This purity of mind and body helps develop true self-respect and at the same time makes one capable of respecting others, because it makes one see in them persons to reverence, insofar as they are created in the image of God...

Chastity includes an *apprenticeship in self-mastery* which is a training in human freedom... Every person knows, by experience, that chastity requires rejecting certain thoughts, words and sinful actions...<sup>91</sup>

In the light of that Church document's content we can deduce that the evangelical counsel of Chastity should help all Christians to understand its proper meaning by recognizing that it makes them grow more and more into their love towards God and

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<sup>91</sup> The Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, N<sup>o</sup> 17-18.

the neighbors, and therefore still animated by such love they can never opt for any harmful means that underestimates respect for human life and its dignity. In addition, since induced abortion is a result of perverse thoughts and henceforth corrupts Chastity, Christians should be reminded once again about maintaining their thoughts uncorrupted by following that which is right. In short, the very consistent consideration of Chastity in our moral Christian life should always enable us to grow more into our sincere love to both God and our neighbors by keeping unstained the divine image perceived in those with whom we live.

### **4.3. Formation of Christian Conscience**

This point aims at revisiting the conception that people have about the use of their conscience, especially as Christians. This is because the influence of abortion over many countries from whichever corner in the world has shown that people's conscious has been corrupted, thus erroneous whereby they are no longer able to distinguish that which is good from that which is evil. As asserted by Richard Rwiza, "Formation of Christian conscience focuses on the importance of the subject or the acting person as a moral agent. It endeavors to steer clear of the legalistic and extrinsic view of the manuals, which consider moral life basically as actions in obedience to the law."<sup>92</sup> At this level the moral principle of following good and distancing oneself from that which is evil has been undermined and leads to the lowering of man's moral level. That is why such an experience of the legalization of abortion in some countries and its secret dominion over human life has pushed us to reconsider the role of conscience in human actions in order to do what is right in God's sight as Christians on the journey towards

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<sup>92</sup> Rwiza R., *Formation of Christian Conscience in Modern Africa*, 97.

our eternal destiny of sharing in God's everlasting life. Since the present moral recommendation constitutes the task that should be undertaken by both the Church and the State in order to promote good values, it goes without saying that conscience should be the master of every kind of acts performed by human beings, bearing in mind that a right conscience should always culminate into that which is edifying and is in accordance with that which is good. Moreover, talking about Conscience in the Church's context, Rodrigo Mejia borrows Mzee Jomo Kenyatta's statements as follows: "The Church is the conscience of society, and today a society needs a conscience. Do not be afraid to speak."<sup>93</sup> This statement emphasizes the role of the Church in denouncing every kind of evil perpetrated in the society such that the latter may not lose its values and principles over which it is built. The same appeal is applied to the abortion case as far as its negative influence on our contemporary world is concerned. With regard to this, let us end up saying that a very good and well trained conscience promoted by both the Church and the State should never opt for abortion as being good, if not guiding people towards the right path of opposing any kind of attempts that tends to undermine the dignity of human life. All this because conscience is also a gift inherited from God in order to walk on his paths by doing what is right.

#### **4.4. The Notion of Responsible parenthood**

As such, the theory of responsible parenthood is not just a concern for married couples since they too are not spared from the issue of abortion and infertility, but rather a kind of a psychological preparation to young Christian people on their journey towards marriage life, as well as a theory of which all Christians should be aware of, despite

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<sup>93</sup> Mejia R., *The Conscience of the Society*, 3.

their different status in the Church. In fact, through this theory we are called to be more responsible while performing any act. Then since we are in the context of keeping the originality of the procreative dimension in marriage life as opposed to threatening life through abortion, we are being reminded in both *Humane Vitae* and *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution of the Church, that: “Responsible parenthood refers to the morally upright way in which spouses regulate the birth of children in fulfillment of their God-given mission to transmit new life.”<sup>94</sup> In the same way, still on the same note, Saint Pope Paul VI, states that “truly responsible parenthood is based on a hierarchy of duties or responsibilities... Therefore, responsible parenthood is a vocation of service to life-giving love, and it involves a holistic and integral vision of the human person.”<sup>95</sup>

All this is just about the Pope’s encouragement to all people of good will but most importantly to married couples to acknowledge the importance of bearing children and being able to raise them as it deserves according to the truth of the Gospel values and the moral teaching of the Church with regard to some ethical issues.

Otherwise, if parents do become irresponsible through siding with immoral practitioners, it is very obvious that their family will be destroyed together with the future of their kids since they lack all the necessary values for a coherent life experience. With respect to life while still stressing more about married couples’ active part into sharing into God’s creative project teaches that “couples should be truly responsible parents, transmitting life responsibly.”<sup>96</sup> Hence, once this is taken into account, parents as well as those who assist them in fulfilling such a task will ever remain heralds of life and its dignity as at the same a divine gift to

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<sup>94</sup> Paul VI, *Humane Vitae*, N<sup>o</sup> 10; and *Gaudium et Spes*, N<sup>o</sup> 51.

<sup>95</sup> Paul VI, *HV*, N<sup>o</sup> 10 and 7.

<sup>96</sup> *GS*, N<sup>o</sup> 51.

humanity and a treasure which should be protected against any kind of harm as abortion does. To sum up, in the desire to reawaken the conscience of married couples about the theory of responsible parenthood with regard to abortion, Rodrigo reasserts that:

“Direct abortion is direct killing, and this may never be tolerated. The damage caused to the mother is of a very serious nature, and this should not be underestimated. It is important for our people not to be led astray by false theories about abortion. They should be brought to realize that, from the time of conception, one is dealing with human life, and this may not be destroyed. That the woman has control over the child conceived in her womb in such a way that she can decide to have it destroyed is totally false.”<sup>97</sup>

So here it is just a call to married couples and all other members of the Church to be happy with their task of transmitting life as God ordered, rather than destroying it through abusive means; children are not a sign of love between married couples, but first and foremost God’s gift to parents such that in their turn they may also witness to the same life before their children through educating them properly.

#### **4.5. The NaproTechnology Theory for the treatment of Infertility**

This theory deals with the issue of Infertility as resulting from induced abortion, far from being a natural phenomenon.

As defined by Thomas Hilgers,

“NaProTECHNOLOGY (Natural Procreative Technology) is a new women's health science that monitors and maintains a woman's reproductive and gynecological health.

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<sup>97</sup> Mejia R., *The Conscience of the Society*, 44.

It provides medical and surgical treatments that cooperate completely with the reproductive system... This is the first women's health science to network family planning with reproductive health monitoring and maintenance. It is a fertility-care based medical approach rather than a fertility-control approach to family planning and gynecological health.”<sup>98</sup>

It is approved and promoted by the Church in a way that allows infertile women to undergo some treatments and as a matter of fact, being helped to overcome the stress caused by abortion be it in their marriage or celibate lives.

Given this context, the NaproTechnology Theory aims at defending life at any cost through providing especially unproductive with necessary guidelines for them to be productive and promoters of human life as far as its sacred character is concerned.

Thus, as defined by Theresa Stigen, Natural Procreative Technology is “A major breakthrough in monitoring and maintaining a woman's reproductive and gynecological health. It provides medical and surgical treatments that cooperate completely with the reproductive system.”<sup>99</sup> On his side, Joseph B. Stanford and other authors say that: “Natural procreative technology (NaProTechnology, NPT) is an integrated and systematic approach to infertility that is suitable for primary care settings. It is based on a detailed study of events that occur during ovulation and throughout the menstrual cycle.”<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, it is said that this theory is applied

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<sup>98</sup> <http://www.naprotechnology.com/>

<sup>99</sup> Stigen T., <http://www.jpilifecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/naproppt.pdf>

<sup>100</sup>B. Stanford J., [http://fertilitycare.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/outcomes\\_from\\_treatment\\_of\\_infertility\\_with\\_natural\\_procreative\\_technology\\_in\\_an\\_irish\\_general\\_practice.pdf](http://fertilitycare.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/outcomes_from_treatment_of_infertility_with_natural_procreative_technology_in_an_irish_general_practice.pdf)

on various situations among which we mention the issue of chronic infertility periods as originating from various chronic conditions of an uncompleted treatment to which we relate the issue of induced abortion. In addition, in the process of talking about patients to whom this theory should be freely applied, Theresa tries to mention the following:

“Catholic women/couples who want to remain faithful to the Church’s teachings on medical ethics;

Catholic women/couples who have tried the unethical “standard of care” treatments and are unsatisfied;

Non-Catholic Christian women/couples who are beginning to realize the deeper implications of what it means to be Pro-Life;

Women/couples regardless of faith who have tried the “standard of care” treatments and are unsatisfied;

Women/couples regardless of faith who want an approach that empowers them to understand and cooperate with their bodies.<sup>101</sup>

The outcomes of this theory have been noticed visible in some countries like Ireland, Canada and Columbia through promoting high birth rates as a means of being pro-life agents in contrast to being pro-abortionists.

To conclude, this is what Joseph and other authors experienced in the mentioned countries about the outcomes of the Natural Procreative Technology: “The main outcome was live birth, and secondary outcomes included conceptions and multiple

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<sup>101</sup> Stigen T., <http://www.jpilifecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/naproppt.pdf>

births. Crude proportions and adjusted life-table proportions were calculated per 100 couples.”<sup>102</sup>

#### **4.6. The Implication of the State Laws**

This is the last moral recommendation that we would like to develop in recalling the bound which exists and should always be noticed between the Church when it comes to promoting good values in the society in the light of various principles and rules of life. Earlier before, when we talked of forming people’s conscience with regard to abortion, we referred to mzee Jomo Kenyatta’s statement borrowed by Rodrigo that “the Church is the conscience of the society”<sup>103</sup>, this is a visible sign of the transparent collaboration which mzee Jomo Kenyatta showed as existing between both entities during his time. While one entity is promoting good values in the light of the Gospel Values together with the Magisterial Teaching, the other entity brings its contribution through promulgating positive laws or decrees which encourage citizens to be more devoted towards all that which is good. At this point, the avoidance of any confusion of values between the two instances should really help all citizens not to stray from the right path since both the Church and the State are working for the good promotion of the whole human person in all his or her dimensions, still in reference to the fact that all human beings were created in God’s image and likeness. Taken as such and distancing itself from any attempt to promoting or legalizing evil and immoral practices such as corruption, gay marriages, the use of contraceptives, euthanasia, and above all induced abortion which all aim at gaining economic interests after undermining all the

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<sup>102</sup> B. Stanford J., [http://fertilitycare.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/outcomes\\_from\\_treatment\\_of\\_infertility\\_with\\_natural\\_procreative\\_technology\\_in\\_an\\_irish\\_general\\_practice.pdf](http://fertilitycare.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/outcomes_from_treatment_of_infertility_with_natural_procreative_technology_in_an_irish_general_practice.pdf)

<sup>103</sup> Mejia R., *The Conscience of the Society*, 3.

possible values due to erroneous conscience, all leaders will serve as good examples to their citizens and Christians on how to value life and show respect for human dignity.

Looking at the implication of the Congolese government into the issue of Abortion, we will come to understand that abortion has never been legalized in any way within the Constitutions, though there are those who practice it illicitly and secretly but still at their own risk because the moment they are caught they have to undergo a very serious of imprisonment for not less than five to ten years since abortion is perceived as a crime and a violation of the right to life. In addition, while applying it to the Kenyan context as one of the African countries, Muema Boniface asserts that:

“It is very clear from our discussion of the civil law and the right to life that there are no indications or arguments that can validly justify the direct taking of life of the unborn, and indeed all reasons given for abortion are seriously flawed.

Through the arguments based on the civil law and the fundamental right to life, we have demonstrated that the life of the unborn is untouchable. To accept abortion on grounds offered by pro-abortionists would be to jeopardize not only the life of the unborn, but all humanity and its future.”<sup>104</sup>

Referring to some political leaders who tend and some have already legalized abortion in their countries, Buema conquers with what we said about mzee Jomo Kenyatta that the Church is the conscience of the society, by calling the Church to always make such a task visible as follows: “The Church should make a statement to the government that a legislation of abortion, signifying recognition by the State of the right to abortion, even if only in given cases and under certain conditions, is contrary to right reason,

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<sup>104</sup> WAEMA MUEMA B., *Abortion, The Civil Law and the Right to Life: A Moral Evaluation in Relation to Kenya*, 69.

which demands also from the State the obligation to ensure absolute respect for every innocent life, particularly if it is undefended.”<sup>105</sup>

#### **4.7. Conclusion**

In the course of this part we have been talking about some helpful and credible moral recommendations which may help Christians and all other people of good will to be once again heralds and promoters of human life by distancing themselves from any harmful attempt that threatens life and its dignity through proceeding to the deliberate end of innocent lives. This is just a kind of reawakening our conscience in order to discern more over our actions before acting, and be thereafter aware of their outcomes in order to assume total responsibility. Moreover, if the moral recommendations that we have tried to highlight here could be taken into account, we are very much convinced that we will get many pro-life agents than pro-abortionists since we have already seen the consequences and the impact of abortion on some married couples and on the youth whereby it destroys people’s marriages and the youth’s future. Thus for this to be successful, the use of our reason, freedom, will and conscience together under the light of the Gospel values will enable each and every human being to acknowledge the relevance of life far beyond any other consideration in people’s daily life experience as social, moral and religious beings.

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<sup>105</sup> WAEMWA MUEMA B., *Abortion, The Civil Law and the Right to Life: A Moral Evaluation in Relation to Kenya*, 73.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

At first sight, it could be convenient for us to start giving the major motivation which incited us to engage in such a very challenging issue which has already invaded many societies all over the world to the point of corrupting their cultural values in all perspectives. Induced Abortion as a threat to human life and its dignity as willed by God the Creator has never gone without side effects in those who either promote or practice it. As we were moving forward, in the course our work we came to inquire about its dangerous and destructive effects over women and young ladies' lives as far as their outcomes are concerned. It looks like before performing the action, the practitioners never dedicate enough time of discernment; it then after doing it that they come to be aware of its evil and shameful impact upon the whole of their being since it affects all the dimensions of their lives. For pro-abortionists, abortion should be promoted and even legalized for the sake of saving women's lives than the life of the fetus existing in her womb since for them, it is not yet a human being and therefore the visible life perceived in the existence of the pregnant woman is that which should be given the first priority. They all claim this in the name of freedom whereby we have all due right to act according to our own conscience and reason. Such thinking contributes to the proliferation of many moral issues that have already started influencing our contemporary societies because people seem to be fed up with social, civil and ecclesiastical observances which are supposed to be as the guidelines for them to live a

life worthy of itself. Without any need to mention all the challenges that the society has been facing in our times, the most interesting one is abortion whereby through it life has lost its sacred character since it is a gift of God to humanity, and besides, there can never be any other possibility of being into movement, unless we have life first; thus destroying life through abortion is to violate God's love towards humanity as recorded in the Book of Genesis 1-2 whereby he ordered the human being to fill the earth through procreation and thereafter entrusted to him the power to exercise dominion over all the rest of creatures on earth. Abortion as the deliberate expulsion or termination of the fetus in the mother's womb since pregnancy is perceived by pro-choice as being an accident resulting from sexual intercourse, is credited to be as old as man is since it is linked to man's history; this is why in the first part of our work we tried to make a historical approach of abortion by looking back to the early times up to now. Though illicitly practiced by some individuals and promoted by some philosophers like Plato and Aristotle without being legalized, we have seen that in many cultures like in Rome and in Greece, abortion was always considered as evil. For instance in the Greek culture, abortion was never approved because of clinging more to Hippocrates's oath of safeguarding life at any cost and to not promote any means that can be responsible for its withdrawal. The same got supported in the roman culture by some emperors. Surprisingly, despite some people who tried the level vest to value life, induced abortion ended up winning many areas all over the world until it pervaded Africa; thus, a challenge to the African cultural practice. While moving still, we ended up talking about the various types and techniques used by pro-choices in order to make it successful. After defining induced or direct abortion as being the complete removal of the fetus in the mother's womb, and indirect abortion as not really willed by the pregnant woman,

we learned about various traditional as well modern methods which make abortion to be performed in a very easy way.

In the second part of our work we went to look at the approach of Infertility as connected to Abortion since it is one of the major consequences which result from that very practice. This got done in the Congolese context, after certainly starting to understand both issues from the African and traditional perspective by looking for their causes from which we deduced that two of them are fustigated as going against the African cultural and religious values. In this way abortion and infertility have been grasped as having led many married couples to divorce or infidelity, and most importantly have been held responsible for the loss of the practitioners' dignity within the society. To add more, abortion has impacted over many young lives through bringing about shameful outcomes in all perspectives to the extent of preventing them from fulfilling their heart desires in terms of studies, marriage life and jobs as future responsible leaders.

In the third part we went to revisit the consideration of human dignity with regard to the effects of both abortion and infertility. Here we recalled the fact that human life should never be sacrificed for the sake of something evil since it is God's best gift given to humanity, and therefore should be safeguarded at all cost through avoiding to cooperate in means that destroy it. Thus, this was about reasserting the inalienable dignity of the right to life. For pro-choices promoting abortion is another kind of means through which they will survive, and yet morally speaking, it is not every path that leads towards good. Henceforth, instead of contributing to the well and successful progress of the society in terms of labor, abortion is never a work since it refrain the society from being that which it should be. Through Saint Pope John Paul II's encyclical on human

work, we hear that: “Work is one of the characteristics that distinguish man from the rest of creatures, whose activity for sustaining their lives cannot be called work. Only man is capable of work, and only man works, at the same time by work occupying his existence on earth. Thus work bears a particular mark of man and of humanity, the mark of a person operating within a community of persons. And this mark decides its interior characteristics; in a sense it constitutes its very nature.”<sup>106</sup> To this effect, what we are taught is to acknowledge that work makes man to be really what he or she ought to be, on the condition that it is performed in the right way in respect to human dignity.

Then came finally the last part in which we tried to mention some moral recommendations such as rethinking of the relevance of human sexuality, formation of Christian conscience, the practice of some virtues and the evangelical counsel of chastity until we reached the State’s implication in the project of eradicating the issue of abortion and infertility as being at the center of undermining human life and its dignity. Having said that, we sincerely hope that we have not been and won’t be the first or the last one to have engaged in such a matter, and for this reason, we leave the debate open to all people of good will who will express the sincere desire and devotion towards human life through discouraging the spread of abortion to the detriment of life. Henceforth, their researches will also enrich our work such that altogether we may continue to witness to human life and its dignity as far as its divine origin is concerned by virtue of the noble fact that all human beings bear within themselves the indestructible image of God.

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<sup>106</sup> Saint Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Excercens*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome, Introductive part.

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