

clergy, and laity to bear witness to the sanctity of life in the public arena, especially noting in this connection the work and witness of Orthodox Christians for Life; and commits the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America to continued witness on behalf of the God—given sanctity of life;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America recognizes that opposition to and condemnation of abortion in all cases, except to save the life of the mother, is not enough. and that the Orthodox Church and Orthodox Christians have a moral obligation to work for the creation and maintenance of Orthodox adoption agencies and for the facilitation of adoption procedures for families to consider adopting a homeless or unwanted or disabled infant, regardless of the child's racial or ethnic background in the realization that the Church as a whole and the parish community in particular is called to give active material and spiritual support to those who accept the responsibility of adoption and participate in crisis pregnancy centers;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this Archdiocese recognizes and affirms spiritual, pastoral and educational efforts towards moral persuasion, directed to the father as much as to the mother, to help stem the present hemorrhaging of unwanted unborn human persons and lives, and asks Orthodox Christians throughout the United States and Canada to support those Pro—Life organizations that strive to protect the rights of the unborn.

The above statement appeared in *The Word Magazine*, February 1994 on pages 4-6 in an article entitled, "Contemporary Moral Issues: Statement on Issues Concerning the Sanctity and Dignity of Human Life"

Websites of Orthodox Life-Affirming Ministries:

The Treehouse www.wichitatreeshouse.org

A ministry in Wichita, Kansas that offers help to women who are abortion minded. The Treehouse seeks to transform the lives of mothers and children with God's love and genuine personal care.

Zoe for Life www.zoeforlifeonline.org

A ministry that helps women who need emotional and spiritual support during crisis pregnancies; to provide confidential access to existing professional agencies; to connect interested women with potential adoptive Orthodox Christian families.

Orthodox Christians for Life www.oclife.org

This ministry of Orthodox Christians aims and goals are to present and support the position of the Orthodox Church on matters of the sanctity of innocent human life by initiating and encouraging education and action. They also serve as a clearing house for information regarding sanctity of life issues.



We acknowledge, therefore, that life begins with conception, because we contend that the soul begins at conception. Life begins when the soul begins.
– Tertullian (c. 223)

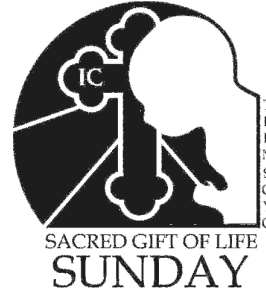
The strong belief in the sanctity and sacredness of life, based on Scripture and Holy Tradition, obliges us to teach that abortion is the killing of a human life. Since the earliest of times, the sacred canons of our Church and the writings of the Church Fathers have taught that both those who administer abortion and those who have abortions are committing serious sins, thereby separating themselves from God and jeopardizing their salvation. Therefore it is of vital importance that you stand for life by your example.

– Metropolitan Philip, in a letter to the Teens of the Antiochian Archdiocese, January 2006

Today, January 18, 2009, is the Sunday that precedes the 35th anniversary of the tragic Supreme Court Decision of *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion in the United States. This Supreme Court decision overturned all moral and logical reasoning that most citizens of our society held and practiced. Since 1973, over 43 million lives have been aborted. Approximately 93% of the women who have had abortions cited they did so for social reasons (i.e. unready for responsibility, can't afford the baby, concern over how baby would change her life, etc) as opposed to issues regarding the mother's health, the baby's health, rape or incest. These few facts are very alarming for us as Orthodox Christians who hold all life as sacred and holy.

The teens of our archdiocese are very concerned about this issue and desire to do whatever is in their ability to help bring about change that leads to godliness and holiness. The members of the North American Council (NAC) of SOYO, with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Philip, are leading our Archdiocese in observing Sunday, January 15, 2009, as the "Sacred Gift of Life Sunday: *Protecting the Life of the Unborn*". Our teens, as part of the celebration of January as Orthodox Education Month, are furthering their education, understanding and commitment regarding the Orthodox Church's teaching on the sacred gift of life and abortion. In turn, they are helping to bring a greater awareness to the faithful of our parishes and throughout their local communities.

Prayers for the Sacred Gift of Life



We, the members of Teen SOYO encourage the faithful to offer the following prayers daily, and especially on January 22nd, the regretful anniversary of the 1973 Supreme Court decision of Roe v. Wade that legalized abortion:

Again we pray that You will grant to the people of this nation the will to do good, to flee from all evil, and to practice all righteousness, making us respectful of life and sharers of Your blessings, caring for one another in mercy and truth.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Again we pray that You will banish all evil from our hearts and wickedness from our laws, enabling us to be servants of Your holy will and performers of Your love.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Again we pray that You will kindle in our hearts the will to care for the needy, to show kindness to the poor, to aid the homeless and to help the helpless.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, Who are in the bosom of the Father, True God, source of life and immortality, Light of Light, who came into the world to enlighten it, You were pleased to be conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary for the salvation of our souls by the power of Your All-Holy Spirit. O Master, Who came that we might have life more abundantly, we ask You to enlighten the minds and hearts of those blinded to the truth that life begins at conception, and that the unborn in the womb are already adorned with Your image and likeness; enable us to guard, cherish and protect the lives of all those who are unable to care for themselves. For You are the Bestower of Life, bringing each person from non-being into being, sealing each person with divine and infinite love. Be merciful, O Lord, to those who, through ignorance or willfulness, affront Your divine goodness and providence through the evil act of abortion. May they, and all of us, come to the light of Your Truth and glorify You, the Giver of Life, together with Your Father and Your All-Holy and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Resolution on Abortion

We hold that children are to be received by us as gifts of God, to be cared for lovingly, joyfully, and sacrificially. We believe that the willful abortion of children is an act of murder. We bear witness to the sanctity of life and are committed to prayerful, thoughtful action to help stem the present hemorrhaging of unborn human lives. We recognize our moral obligation to be a supportive community for those who adopt homeless, unwanted, or disabled children. We are followers of the One who said. “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

WHEREAS the Orthodox Church, from its inception on the day of Pentecost, has condemned abortion as a grievous sin; and,

WHEREAS each and every innocent human life is unique and precious to God and that human life begins at the moment of conception and continues, uninterrupted, until the moment of natural death; and,

WHEREAS this situation is not dependent upon any factor other than our humanity, Peripheral conditions such as age, health, wealth, social status and societal perceptions of worth are totally unimportant. Our God is no respecter of persons; and,

WHEREAS the Webster decision by the Supreme Court of the United States of America has modified the 1973 decision of Roe vs. Wade relating to the abortion issue and has permitted each state to come forth and protect unborn human life as has occurred in Louisiana, Utah, Idaho, Pennsylvania, and Guam; and,

WHEREAS the Supreme Court of Canada has struck down as unconstitutional all laws protecting the unborn and therefore no legislation currently exists regulating abortion in Canada; and,

WHEREAS innocent human life must always be protected and preserved, and in all possible ways available to each culture; and,

WHEREAS the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America has consistently spoken out in defense of the sanctity of life, and has done so in connection with contemporary threats to the life of the unborn, the handicapped, the infirm, and the elderly; and,

WHEREAS abortion in all cases has been condemned by the Orthodox Church in America unequivocally on the basis of Orthodox theology, which faithfully reflects for today nearly two thousand years of Christian doctrine and ethical teaching; and,

WHEREAS, before the end of this century, drug induced “do—it—yourself” abortion will more than likely be commonplace, and legislation will have little effect on whether or not a woman brings her child to term, except all such abortifacient drugs are made illegal;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America strongly reaffirms the Orthodox Church’s opposition to abortion in all cases, and that it does so on theological and moral grounds; commends the efforts of Orthodox bishops,