

A Quiet Discussion on Abortion (5)

The laws of Abortion in the Church - 2

+ **St. Basil the great:** He is one of the Fathers of the Church in the fourth century, he says in his second law: **“The woman who aborts herself must be punished as a murderer. Justice must protect the child who is to be born as well as the woman that plotted against herself. In most instances the woman dies during these acts of abortion. Hurting the child is another murder. It is a duty to take their confessions without delay before death and accept them in the Church after a reasonable period of about ten years and offering remedies according to their repentance.”** This means that the woman who kills her baby during pregnancy by using medicinal drugs is a murderer. The period of punishment was reduced to ten years instead for life, after which period the woman is accepted in the Church and offered Holy Communion. The priest may also reduce the punishment if he is sure of her repentance.



+ **Pope Shenouda III** taught us to gently deal with those who committed abortion by depriving them from communion for only one year after they have regretted and repented from their sin.

* **Responsibility for abortion:**

Does the responsibility fall only on the mother? Certainly not. When abortion is performed by a doctor, they share the responsibility with the mother and deserves the same Church punishment. If the husband is aware and agrees on abortion, he is also sharing in the responsibility and punishment. If there any encouragement or help from another person or persons, the blood of the aborted child is on the heads of all who share in the murder. The husband who does not take care of his wife's health shares also the responsibility.

+ We must note that sometimes abortion is not intentional as Pope Shenouda III says:

“Not-intentional abortion means that the mother is careless or hard working which lead to abortion. Pregnant mothers at work who are ill-treated by their employers which lead to abortion, the employer shares the responsibility, for the sixth commandment says, ‘You shall not murder’”

(To be continued)

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