

# WHAT DOES THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACH ABOUT ABORTION?

## The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on Abortion Prepared by Deal W. Hudson for Priests for Life

The teaching on abortion is found in "Section Two" of the *Catechism* under "The Ten Commandments, Chapter Two: 'You Shall Love Your Neighbor as Yourself, ARTICLE 5." I've added emphasis by **bolding certain words**. Note the references to *Donum Vitae*, "Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation," issued on February 22, 1987, by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

**2258** "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 circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being.**" *Donum vitae*, intro. 5

### Abortion

**2270** 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.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you."  
*Jer 1:5; cf. Job 10:8-12; Ps 22:10-11*

**2271** Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. **Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law:** You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish. *Didache 2,2.*

**2272** Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life....Rather, she [the Church] makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, **the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.**

**2273** The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a *constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation:*

"The inalienable rights of the person must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority.... **Among such fundamental rights one should mention in this regard every human being's right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death.**" *Donum vitae III.*

"The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law. **When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined.** . . . As a consequence of the respect and protection which must be ensured for the unborn child from the moment of conception, **the law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child's rights.**" *Donum vitae III.*