

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.*