

of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.

#CCC 2272 Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life. "A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*," "by the very commission of the offense," and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law. The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she 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.

Right to life

#CCC 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. These human rights depend neither on single individuals nor on parents; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin. 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."

"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."

#CCC 2274 Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.

Excommunication

#CCC 1463 Certain particularly grave sins incur excommunication, the most severe ecclesiastical penalty, which impedes the reception of the sacraments and the exercise of certain ecclesiastical acts, and for which absolution consequently cannot be granted, according to canon law, except by the Pope, the bishop of the place or priests authorized by them. In danger of death any priest, even if deprived of faculties for hearing confessions, can absolve from every sin and excommunication.

Can. 1364 §1 An apostate from the faith, a heretic^[1] or a schismatic^[2] incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication, without prejudice to the provision of Can. 194 §1, n. 2; a cleric, moreover, may be punished with the penalties mentioned in Can. 1336 §1, nn. 1, 2 and 3.

Conclusion

Any Catholic who supports intrinsically evil acts (abortion, euthanasia, cloning, same-sex marriage, etc), votes for them, or otherwise financially supports or furthers their cause, cannot remain Catholic. Catholics must adhere to Catholic teaching or they separate themselves from the Church; the Body of Christ.

Such Catholics are excommunicated by virtue of the acts themselves. A *latae sententiae* (automatic) excommunication is triggered when they support, enable, and perpetuate such obvious and egregious evil (Cf. Code of Canon Law, Canons 1364, 1398; Canon 1329, §2). They are in turn forbidden from approaching the sacraments as the result (Cf. Catechism of Catholic Church # 1463).

Jesus does not countenance the destruction of innocent human life. If, when aware of the Church's position that abortion and euthanasia are intrinsically evil, a Catholic deliberately votes for a pro-abortion candidate when there is a pro-life alternative, he separates himself from the Church and from Jesus Christ. His name will be entered beside the name of Pontius Pilate in the Book of Infamy.

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^[1] A baptized and professed person who denies or doubts a truth revealed by God or proposed for belief by the Catholic Church is a heretic (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Robert C. Broderick, Ed., Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1987, p. 262).

^[2] One who voluntarily separates himself from the Church through refusal to submit to the authority of the Church or the pope and forms another sect. *Ibid*, p. 543.

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Disciple of Pontius Pilate or Disciple of Jesus?

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"He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. . . On the third day he rose again"

The *Antiquities of the Jews*, a work compiled in Rome between the years 93 and 94 by the historian Flavius Josephus makes an explicit reference to Christ "executed by order of the procurator Pontius Pilate during the reign of Tiberius."

Jesus of Nazareth was condemned by the Sanhedrin as a blasphemer, and condemned by Pilate as a usurper. Pilate asks "Are you the King of the Jews?" (Jn 18:33). He asked this question because it is precisely of this that the Sanhedrin accused Christ.

Jesus answered, "My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world." said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" (Jn 18:36-38).

"So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this righteous man's blood; see to it yourselves." And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" (Matt. 27:24-25).

Pilate knew in his heart that the man, Jesus, who stood before him, was innocent of the charges that were laid against him, yet did not have the courage to deny the screaming mob. His cowardly action was unduly influenced by those who cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him" (Jn 19:6).

Was Pilate truly innocent of the blood of Jesus? He had the power to stop the execution, but, instead, yielded to public opinion; he simply went along with the crowd. As a result his name will forever live in infamy.

"Catholic" Politicians

There are others whose names will be written beside Pilate's. These are the politicians who say, "I am personally against abortion, but I don't believe that I should allow my personal belief to interfere with my responsibility to vote as my constituency expects."

A Knowledgeable Catholic Cannot Vote for a Pro-Abortion Candidate and remain A Catholic.

On May 9, 2007, Reuters reported that: Speaking to reporters aboard the plane taking him on a trip to Brazil, Pope Benedict warned Catholic politicians they risked excommunication if they support abortion... This excommunication was not an arbitrary one but is allowed by Canon (Church) law which says that the killing

of an innocent child incompatible with receiving communion, which is receiving the body of Christ.

“In this context, it must be noted also that a well-formed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals” (*Doctrinal Note on some questions regarding The Participation of Catholics in Political Life*, Nov 21, 2002)

A Catholic can disagree with the Church's position on health care, education, economic security, immigration, and taxes and still remain a Catholic in good-standing. However, if when aware of the Church's position that abortion and euthanasia are intrinsically evil, a Catholic deliberately votes for a pro-abortion candidate when there is a pro-life alternative, he separates himself from the Church and from Jesus Christ - forfeiting salvation. Repentance and sacramental confession are necessary to regain membership in the Body of Christ.

Let's review what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches concerning this matter.

Authority of the Church

#CCC 144 “To obey (from the Latin ob-audire, to “hear or listen to”) in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself.

#CCC 156 What moves us to believe is not the fact that revealed truths appear as true and intelligible in the light of our natural reason: we believe “because of the authority of God himself who reveals them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.”

#CCC 171 The Church, “the pillar and bulwark of the truth,” faithfully guards “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” She guards the memory of Christ's words; it is she who from generation to generation hands on the apostles' confession of faith. As a mother who teaches her children to speak and so to understand and communicate, the Church our Mother teaches us the language of faith in order to introduce us to the understanding and the life of faith.

#CCC 182 We believe all “that which is contained in the word of God, written or handed down, and which the Church proposes for belief as divinely revealed” (Paul VI, CPG, § 20).

#CCC 197 As on the day of our Baptism, when our whole life was entrusted to the “standard of teaching,” let us embrace the Creed of our life-giving faith. To say the Credo with faith is to enter into communion with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and also with the whole Church which transmits the faith to us and in whose midst we believe...

#CCC 2246 It is a part of the Church's mission to pass moral judgments even in matters related to politics, whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it.

#CCC 2256 Citizens are obliged in conscience not to follow the directives of civil authorities when they are contrary to the demands of the moral order. “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Who belongs to the Catholic Church?

#CCC 837 Fully incorporated into the society of the Church are those who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept all the means of salvation given to the Church together with her entire organization, and who - by the bonds constituted by the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government, and communion - are joined in the visible structure of the Church of Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops.

"Outside the Church there is no salvation"

#CCC 846 How are we to understand this affirmation, often repeated by the Church Fathers? Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body:

Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it.

#CCC 889 In order to preserve the Church in the purity of the faith handed on by the apostles, Christ who is the Truth willed to confer on her a share in his own infallibility. By a “supernatural sense of faith” the People of God, under the guidance of the Church's living Magisterium, “unfailingly adheres to this faith.”

#CCC 892 Divine assistance is also given to the successors of the apostles, teaching in communion with the successor of Peter, and, in a particular way, to the bishop of Rome, pastor of the whole Church, when, without arriving at an infallible definition and without pronouncing in a “definitive manner,” they propose in the exercise of the ordinary Magisterium a teaching that leads to better understanding of Revelation in matters of faith and morals. *To this ordinary teaching the faithful “are to adhere to it with religious assent”* which, though distinct from the assent of faith, is nonetheless an extension of it.

What is Sin?

#CCC 1849 Sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as “an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law.”

#CCC 1850 Sin is an offense against God: “Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in your sight.” Sin sets itself against God's love for us and turns our hearts away from it. Like the first sin, it is disobedience, a revolt against God through the will to become “like gods,” knowing and determining good and evil. Sin is thus “love of oneself even to contempt of God.”

#CCC 1855 Mortal sin destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God's law; *it turns man away from God*, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude, by preferring an inferior

good to him. Venial sin allows charity to subsist, even though it offends and wounds it.

#CCC 1860 Unintentional ignorance can diminish or even remove the imputability of a grave offense. *But no one is deemed to be ignorant of the principles of the moral law, which are written in the conscience of every man.* The promptings of feelings and passions can also diminish the voluntary and free character of the offense, as can external pressures or pathological disorders. Sin committed through malice, by deliberate choice of evil, is the gravest (emphasis mine).

#CCC 1861 Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom, as is love itself. It results in the loss of charity and the privation of sanctifying grace, that is, of the state of grace. If it is not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ's kingdom and the eternal death of hell, for our freedom has the power to make choices for ever, with no turning back. However, although we can judge that an act is in itself a grave offense, we must entrust judgment of persons to the justice and mercy of God.

Do not kill

#CCC 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.”

#CCC 2261 Scripture specifies the prohibition contained in the fifth commandment: “Do not slay the innocent and the righteous.” The deliberate murder of an innocent person is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human being, to the golden rule, and to the holiness of the Creator. The law forbidding it is universally valid: it obliges each and everyone, always and everywhere.

#CCC 2268 The fifth commandment forbids direct and intentional killing as gravely sinful. The murderer and those who cooperate voluntarily in murder commit a sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance. Infanticide, fratricide, parricide, and the murder of a spouse are especially grave crimes by reason of the natural bonds which they break.

#CCC 2269 Unintentional killing is not morally imputable. But one is not exonerated from grave offense if, without proportionate reasons, he has acted in a way that brings about someone's death, even without the intention to do so.

#CCC 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.

#CCC 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”.

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