

Thirty-Fourth Sunday - Ordinary Time
(Our Lord Jesus Christ the King of the Universe)

Exodus 20: 1 -17	Deuteronomy 5: 6 – 21
V. You shall not kill	V. You shall not kill

We begin our look at the Catechism, abortion, and the Fifth Commandment. We learned last week that procured abortion is always a moral evil. This designation of moral evil means that in every procured abortion someone commits a sin. “Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception.” (See The Catechism of the Catholic Church, §2270) This phrase can be used by those who defend abortion as a right. Such defenders will argue that the life of the mother must be respected and protected. Such defenders of abortion claim to respect the life of the child when the infant in the womb is suspected to be handicapped in some way. The very life of society can be at risk by the births of too many unwanted children! So, from these arguments can we declare the infants in the wombs to be unjust aggressors? We read again, “Since the First Century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion.” (See §2271) The very next sentence reads, “This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable.” (See §2271) This sentence is firm and clear. But who incurs the guilt? “Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense.” (See §2272) Can the child in the womb cooperate in his/her abortion? Can an abortion occur without the formal cooperation of the mother? A child cannot cooperate in his/her own abortion. A mother must be present for the procuring of the abortion, but formal cooperation requires discernment. Pressure from others, confusion, a new set of emotions, a new balance of hormones, fears about finances and careers, and so much more, can reduce the freedom of a mother to choose. A priest once noticed the similarity between a pro-abortion poster and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The pro-abortion poster read, “This is my body”. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass makes the person of Jesus present in the words, “This is my body, which will be given up for you.” What would the child in the womb say to his/her parents?? What makes cooperation formal? In declaring a procured abortion to be a grave sin the Catechism teaches that the, “Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed...” (See §2272) And this teaching continues with an extremely important acknowledgment