

Sunday, April 2, 2017

A Quiet Discussion on Abortion (11)

Special Human Cases

Regarding the cases of abortion that take place when a family does not want to have a new baby, and an unwanted pregnancy occurs, H.H. the late Pope Shenouda III was questioned more than once by the congregation in Alexandria during his biweekly meeting at St. Mark Cathedral.

I have reproduced two such questions with the Pope's responses verbatim below.

* The first question, dated October 1st, 2000.

- I gave birth to three children. I was satisfied with them. Afterwards, I became pregnant again. We as a family could not think of raising another child. Therefore, I aborted it myself. I need an absolution to take Communion.

+ H.H. Pope Shenouda's Response:

You have no absolution to partake of Communion. You are a murderer of a human soul. You must be punished for at least one year without Communion, then we can think about your case.

Abortion is killing a living soul, so you have killed the baby, and you come now to take Communion—why?

The lady who herself aborts her own child is a murderer.

You should pray continuously saying: "Forgive me, O Lord, I am a murderer."

Those people think that it is a game, to kill and come back to take an absolution for Communion! How can I give you the absolution? How can we forget the baby you have killed?

Also, if your husband knew and agreed with you about the abortion, he must be banned with you from taking Communion this coming year, as he is a partner with you in the crime of murder.

* The second question, dated January 28th, 2001

(Note: the text that is bolded and in parenthesis in the text of the question below are the comments made by H.H. Pope Shenouda while he was reading the question).

- Twenty years ago, I had two abortions (**She killed the baby**), and after that I took medications twice to abort two additional babies (**She became a professional in performing abortions**). I did not know that in the first forty days in the womb a baby has his or her full human spirit (**It is a mistake for someone to say that the human spirit comes to be united with the body only after the first forty days of pregnancy; this is wrong. The baby has his or her spirit from the first moment. She said, "I did not know"**) Now I am worried about my eternal life. When I confessed, my father of confession told me to read 10 chapters from the Bible and to do 10 metanoias (**What is this? Your father of confession is not taking the problem seriously**) Now I am worried about my eternity.

+ H.H. Pope Shenouda's Response:

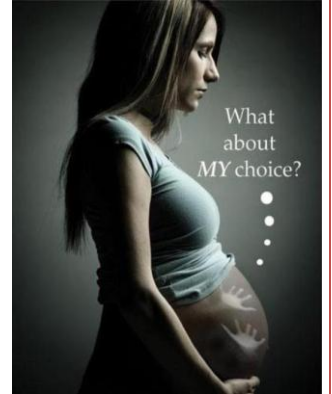
You are prohibited from partaking of Communion for one or two years. Also you have to do the metanoias (prostration/kneeling with repentance) that your confessing father gave you. In each metanoia you should pray saying: "I have sinned, O Lord; I am a murderer of a human soul; I am a murderer of a human soul; have mercy upon me. I am a murderer. Have mercy on me," and repeat this prayer.

Continue for one or two years praying like this without partaking of Communion, neither in feasts nor Sundays nor anytime. You are a murderer.

Who knows if the baby you have killed would have been a great person in the future.

Regarding saying that you did not know, this is not an excuse. We say in our prayers: "Absolve, forgive, and remit, O God, our transgressions; those which we have committed willingly and those which we have committed unwillingly, those which we have committed knowingly and those which we have committed unknowingly, the hidden and manifest..." So the sin which we have committed unknowingly is counted against us, as the book of Leviticus chapters 3 and 4 spoke about people who committed sins unknowingly and when they knew they had to offer a sacrifice. This means that such sin was worthy of punishment.

(To be continued)



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