



CONFERENCE EPISCOPALE DU RWANDA

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PRESS RELEASE OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF RWANDA (CEPR) EXHORTING THE FAITHFUL TO RESPECT LIFE SINCE ITS CONCEPTION AND AVOID COMMITTING THE SIN OF KILLING BY ABORTION

“You shall not kill” (Ex 20:13), this is God's commandment and warning on human life

1. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, in the name of God, the sole holder of all power over life, we exhort you once again to respect human life from its conception.
2. You remember that in our message of December 17, 2010, we asked you to protect human life from conception and not to commit the sin of killing through abortion. Remember also that on December 15, 2017, we sent you another alerting message: *“We are threatened by the pandemic of promiscuity which, by its deplorable consequences, endangers human life, the family and even our entire country. One of its consequences is the unwanted pregnancy that leads to the temptation to resort to legalized abortion to get rid of it »*

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal 5, 14)

3. On this occasion again, we remind you that life is a gift that God gives in his goodness and thanks to his love. Thus, any provoked abortion is a very grave mortal sin since it takes away the life of an innocent human being and to make it worse, it is committed by people who should protect life.
4. The Law N° 68 / 2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offenses and penalties in general, published recently in the Official Gazette Special n°. of 27/09/2018 recognizes that abortion is an offense (Article 123; 124) and provides that anyone who, by any means, advertises drugs, equipment or other substances known to be able to provoke an abortion, commits an offense (Article 127).
5. Unfortunately, Article 125 of the same Law gives reasons for the exemption from criminal responsibility for induced abortion which give the offender the possibility of escaping the penalties provided for in these previous articles, and thus favors temptations to commit this offense that would take away the lives of many innocent human beings. If the pregnant person is under the adult age, or an adult who became pregnant as a result of a forced marriage or incest, that is committed by a person related to her to the second degree, one is not condemned. There is no way these reasons should affect an innocent human life conceived without choosing it. Even when the continuation of pregnancy endangers the life of the pregnant person or the fetus, our common faith in Jesus Christ reminds doctors that they must do all they can to save these two lives, the mother as well as the fetus. And if there ever be any unintended effects on the life of the latter, it is not the result of a premeditated act.

“Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as you did it to the least of these my brethren, it is to me that you did it” (Mt 25:40)

6. Scientific research has shown that induced abortion has many negative effects on the life and conscience of the person who induces it. Indeed, the human being is not a tool that everyone can handle according to his or her will. Human life cannot be weighed on a scale like other things to measure its weight. Neither, its value is determined on the basis of age. Only God, the Creator values it according to his love and knows its dignity. Therefore, the life of a foetus is inviolable. Its value is not determined by parental consent during conception such that it becomes a victim of their weaknesses and their

faults. Thus anyone who resorts to abortion, and the one who helps her eliminate that life before it is born, by all means violates the command of God that forbids killing. And as a result, his or her conscience will always be guilty for it. When the person who did abortion encounters other problems, she often relates them to God's punishment. Thus, any person who commits abortion must be ready to bear in his or her heart the heavy burden of guilt for having sinned in killing an innocent human being.

“You are the salt of the earth [...] you are the light of the world” (Mt 5: 13-14)

7. God loves us and wants to protect us from all these consequences. Let us accept, therefore, fulfilling the responsibilities that he gives us concerning the respect of human life in all its integrity.

8. We, your Bishops:

- We invite you all to do good above all things and to triumph over evil, to listen to the Word of God and live in harmony with your conscience which asks you always to do what is good. Avoid taking shortcuts that unfairly take away life for children and adults who use them;
- We hope that the State will not force doctors in public hospitals to facilitate abortion contrary to their objection of conscience, as this can disrupt their belief and their daily lives;
- We would like to tell all medical staff in our medical centres that we can never allow this sin of abortion;
- We want Christian doctors to take the lead in protecting life by giving good advice to all those who, under the burden of the suffering that life inflicts upon them, come to ask their intervention;
- We urge parents and educators to fulfil their responsibilities well by giving children a good education, instilling in them moral values including self-respect, respect of the others' life and especially the life of the most vulnerable;
- Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, always remember that you will be rewarded for the love and faithfulness that you will have shown in doing what God calls you to do. By your good deeds, teach all those who see you to welcome and protect this life of God given to you as a gift, you will be rewarded.


“Peace be with you” (Jn 20, 26)

9. We finally wish that the peace of God reigns in your hearts. We pray for all of you that you may be cherished children in the eyes of the Creator and that He fills you with love for each other. We join all those who have suffered unjustly imploring the Lord Jesus Christ to be merciful on them in his judgment. We thank everyone who willingly unites with the victims of various injustices helping them to have the courage of choosing life. We entrust you to the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Kibeho.

The grace of God be with you!

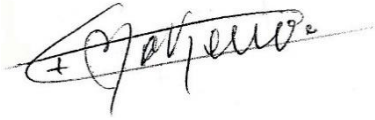
Done at Kigali on 19 October 2018

Your Bishops:

✘ Philippe RUKAMBA, 
Bishop of Butare and
President of the Episcopal Conference of Rwanda.

✘ Thaddée NTIHINYURWA, 
Archbishop of Kigali

✘ Servilien NZAKAMWITA,
Bishop of Byumba



✘ Smaragde MBONYINTEGE,
Bishop of Kabgayi



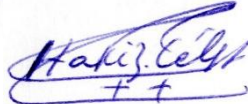
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✘ Antoine KAMBANDA,
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✘ Celestin HAKIZIMANA,
Bishop of Gikongoro and
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✘ Anaclet MWUMVANEZA
Bishop of Nyundo

