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[Subject]

[Date]

Abortion

**Introduction**

In this paper, I will be talking about abortion in light of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is against any kind of abortion process. Whenever there is a process in which the fetus, zygote, embryo or blastocyst gets damaged, it is opposed on a high magnitude. According to the Catholic belief, the human life is to be given respect and protection from the moment it is conceived. From the very beginning of existence, a human being is to be recognized as someone who has certain rights, one of the most pivotal right being; the right to live (Noonan, 85). Nevertheless, certain circumstances are put under consideration, for instance, if the womb is cancerous and chemotherapy is required to remove the cancer. Such acts are said to be morally legitimate.

**Discussion**

In accordance with Code of Canon Law, automatic excommunication is imposed on Latin Catholics who acquire a complete abortion, if they are filling the condition for being a matter of such an approval. The Canon Law is said to be tied to theology. Whether, a woman gets an abortion done on her own terms, if a person participates in an abortion or if an individual holds pro-choice beliefs, it is all condemned under this law. When it comes to the Eastern Churches, they are not a subject to automatic excommunication, but in accordance to the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, the one doing the deed is to be excommunicated by the ruling if to be found guilty for the similar act. The only way the sin will be forgiven is by the Eparchial Bishop. Additionally, the Catholic Church apart from teaching that abortion is immoral; public actions are also taken in contradiction to its validity. There are people from various western countries who are in contradiction with the authority that the Catholic Church has on certain decisions like the opposition and legality of abortion. There are certain views which range from having certain exceptions when a woman is faced by health issues to complete legality and morality of the issue (Mulligan, 739-753). A connection was seen between agreement and Mass attendance of the official teachings that are being taught by the church. Some people are regulars and pretty much agree on the church's pro-life decision. Then some people go once a while; they are supportive of the term pro-choice. Lastly, some people do not attend the Mass at all; they support a wider range of moral issues.

In accordance with respect for the human life, there was a document that was released by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee which was under the light of Pro-life activities. The claim was made that the Catholic Church has condemned abortion to be a wicked act from the very first Century. Having said that, this statement has been argued upon by many historians like Angus Mclaren, John Riddle, John Connery, Ann Hibner Koblitz and John Noonan. There were early Christian Books which rejected the concept of abortion. However, the early church legislations are not fully clear on the concept of the formed and unformed fetus, which was evident by the Greek Septuagint form of Exodus. There are two main thoughts that were seen in the early times. There were writers like Maximus and Gregory who claimed that life started when a child was first conceived. Then there was this other school of thought given by the likes of Lactantius. This concept talked about the soul being infused in an individual’s body after forty days of getting conceived. Further, in time abortion during pregnancy was still condemned and deemed a sin, but the concept of infusion of the soul was kept under consideration. Further, many churches condemned abortion and called it gravely wrong regardless of the fetus being formed or unformed. Not only did the early church saw abortion in negative sight they also would track down abortifacient herbs (Elliott, 37). They were banned from time to time on women for availing. Additionally, it was also said by some notable theologians that instead of killing a child who has been born abortion is rather less sinful, yet an act of sin.

In the olden days, there was also a few statements that were made in regards to what Aristotle had to say that abortion was indeed a sin on all stages, soul-infused or not infused, but once the soul is infused after conceiving, abortion is said to be a murder. It was stated as the killing of innocent life. However, it should also be kept in mind that the old testaments have nothing to say on abortions, it was the Hellenic Jews of Diaspora who formed an opinion on this matter. There were different types of penalties that were given to a woman based on the type of abortion that she has gotten done. The concept of delayed ensoulment was brought in the picture as well, but even the churches who believed in this concept formed various penalties for both early and late abortions. It was simple: abortion on any level was called an evil act. In the very start, the penalties were equal for both early and late abortions (Walker, 1-6). There were others who distinguished between the two, later in the future, the penalty for a late abortion was made heavier. Later abortion in the later days of pregnancy was called as a homicide, a murder. The penalty was set in regards to the magnitude of the act is similar to a murder, for an abortion in the later days the penalty set was death. Then there was a time of three years in which Pope Sixtus V passed the law; that abortion either in the early or late stage was called a murder. The church said that a person who carries out an abortion would be given the penalty of a murderer, an assassin who took the life of an innocent. Sixtus’s successor, Pope Gregory saw that the law was not giving the results that were expected, so he withdrew the similar punishment law after three years. Then the punishment of abortion was limited to the formed fetus criteria.

Later, Pope Pius IX withdrew Gregory XIV the exception of a fetus not yet animated in light of the spiritual penalty of excommunication. He declared that the individuals who carried out a complete and effective abortion sustained excommunication which is kept for ordinaries and bishops. After the Pope made this statement, the penalty was given automatically to anyone who carried out an abortion at any stage of the pregnancy (Han, Rodriguez, and Caughey, 287-288). This was always seen as a serious matter from the very start. It was also seen that the Catholic Canon law stayed in continuation even after 1869. It helped maintain a difference between the abortions of a fetus that was formed an unformed fetus. Later after many years in 1917, the Code of Canon Law took away the division. In short, it is safe to say that other than the exception of three-period time of Sixtus, early was not allowed by the Catholic Canon Law till 1869.

Back in the middle ages, the majority of the church commentators were against all kinds of abortions. After that, in the 14th century Dominican John of Maples made a statement; if for instance, the purpose of the abortion is to save the life of the mother, the aborting of the baby will be permissible, but only in the case, the ensoulment of the child had not reached. This view both got positive and negative remarks (Johnson, 383-396). Later, in the 16th century, it was made accepted by the Catholic Church that abortion was permissible at any stage unless it is the indirect result of a procedure that is being carried out to save the life of the mother. Then, in the 17th century, it was also made permissible to perform an abortion if it was aimed to save the name of a woman. It is also said that in the 18th century it was debated that there is always going to be uncertainty to when the soul enters the fetus. Abortion was generally deemed wrong but was made moral when the life of the mother was at stake. He made a clear statement that it was never right to take a medicine that was so harsh that it will result in the woman losing the fetus. It was also said that the church follows the rule of ensoulment after 40 days when making penalties. Procedures like craniotomy were also prohibited in the olden days as the pregnancy could not be managed after the procedure, and the mother will end up losing the child. Later in 1930, the Pope Pius terminated the law which was known as the direct murder of the innocent. He did this so that the life of the mother can be saved. Then there is the ectopic pregnancy; it is one of the rare occasions where the direct abortion is allowed in order to save the life of the mother as the pregnancy is directly threatening the life of the mother.

**Conclusion**

In accordance with the Canon Law, excommunication does not impose on females who get an abortion done because of inconvenience and fright. The Catholic Church has made sure of the fact that there is indeed a way of forgiveness in such circumstances. The Catholic Church still believes in the notion; that every life conceived has the right to live, but if it is endangering the mother then there are exceptions that can be made. Today in the US the Catholics are in believe of the views that are different from the actual doctrine (Francome). More than 64% of Catholics in 1995 made the statement that they condemn of the fact that abortion is a wrongful act in every scenario. Then again, the result like before also differ today based on how who goes to the church, who does not and who goes once a while. Abortion will always be deemed an act morally wrong by the Catholic Church even today, putting aside the cases of exception.

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