



Nurse with premature baby born at 6 months.

Q. What are we to think of a woman who aborts her child?

A. Let's be very clear. We understand the agony of her decision. We want to stand with her, not against her. We want to help her explore other loving alternatives like adoption. We want to help her. Why can't we love them both?

Q. But adopted children have serious problems.

A. Not so at all. Compared, across the board, to children born into families, adopted children are more stable, more healthy, more educated and lead more stable lives as adults, than biological children—they are, that is, if placed in the adoptive home as young infants. When children are adopted who have lived in a succession of foster homes, there are problems at times. These problems are not from adoption however. Rather they bring the problems with them and sometimes the adoptive parents are unable to cope with them.

Q. But isn't it cruel to allow a handicapped child to be born—to a miserable life?

A. The assumption that handicapped people enjoy life less than "normal" ones has been shown to be false. A well-documented investigation has shown that there is no difference between handicapped and normal persons in their degree of life satisfaction, and outlook of what lies immediately ahead and vulnerability to frustration. "Though it may be both common and fashionable to believe that the malformed enjoys life less than normal, this appears to lack both empirical and theoretical support."

Paul Cameron & D. Van Hoeck, Am. Psychologic Assn. Meeting, 1971

Q. What about a woman who's been raped?

A. Pregnancy from forcible rape is extremely rare. (See Wilke, Abortion: Questions and Answers). The victim must be supported, loved and helped, but we should never kill an innocent baby for the crime of his father.

Q. But legal abortion is better than dangerous back-alley abortions and their toll of women dying, isn't it?

A. Most such stories are false. In 1972, the year before the U.S. Supreme Court decision on abortion, only 39 women died in all 50 states from illegal abortions. (25 more died in 1972 from legal abortions). These were 39 tragedies, but compared to over 5,000,000 pregnancies that year this is a minuscule number. Certainly it shows that claims of 5-10,000 deaths and one million illegal abortions are totally ridiculous.

Either there were not many illegal abortions or all illegal abortions were amazingly safe.

Q. What about her right to choose?

A. The first question to ask about any action that is morally questionable is not "who can choose to do it?" but "is the action right or wrong in the first place?" Consider other examples such as rape, stealing, child abuse. Do we first ask "who decides?" who can choose to do these things? Not! We first ask "are these actions right or wrong?"

Just so with abortion. The first question must be "is abortion right or wrong?" The "choice and who decides?" question follows. It is never the first question.

Another answer to "choice" is, choice to do what? Clearly it is a choice to kill.

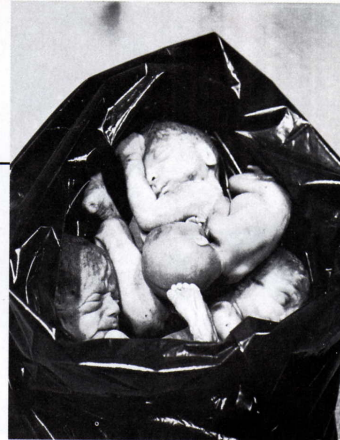
LIFE OF DEATH

Q. Isn't abortion another means of contraception?

A. No. Do not confuse abortion with contraception. Contraception prevents new life from beginning. Abortion kills the new life that has already begun.

Q. What is an abortifacient then?

A. Some of today's so-called "contraceptives" are really abortive at times. This is when ovulation is not suppressed, fertilization does occur, but the one-week-old living human embryo is unable to implant into the wall of her womb. If the "contraceptive" drug or device prevents implantation then it is really an abortifacient.



Human Garbage--"These dead babies had reached fetal ages of 18 to 24 weeks before being killed by abortion. This is the result of one morning's work at a Canadian teaching hospital."

Q. I've heard abortion compared to slavery.

A. The analogy is accurate. The Dred Scott Decision in 1857 ruled that black people were not "persons" in the eyes of the Constitution. Slaves could be bought, sold, used or even killed as property of the owner. That decision was overturned by the 14th Amendment. Now the court has ruled that unborn people are not "persons" in the eyes of the Constitution. They can be killed at the request of their owners (mothers). This dreadful decision can only be reversed by the court itself or overturned by another constitutional amendment.

Q. Why bring unwanted babies into the world?

A. An unwanted pregnancy in the early months does not necessarily mean an unwanted baby after delivery. Dr. Edward Lenoski (U. of S. Cal.) has conclusively shown that 90% of battered children were planned pregnancies.

Since when does someone's life depend upon someone else wanting them. That is an incredibly evil ethic.

Q. Abortion is only a religious question, isn't it?

A. No. Theology certainly concerns itself with respect for human life. It must turn to science, however, to tell it when life begins. The question of abortion is a basic human question that concerns the entire civilized society in which we live. It is not just a Catholic, or Protestant, or Jewish issue. It is a civil rights question, a human right's question, a question of who lives and who can be killed.

Q. A civil rights question? How so?

A. 1) The first question to be asked is: What is this inside of her womb? Is it a human life? The answer is found in natural science, medicine and biology. At the first cell stage, fertilization, this being is alive, not dead. Human?, yes, not another species. Sexed?, yes, male or female from fertilization. Complete?, yes, nothing has been added to the single cell, whom each of us once was, nothing except nutrition and oxygen.

Science has long since shown conclusively that this is a human life from the beginning.

2) The second question is: Should there be equal protection by law for all living humans, or should the law discriminate, fatally against an entire class of living humans as with abortion, which discriminates on the basis of age (too young) and place-of-residence (living in the womb).

So, abortion is a violation of human rights, of civil rights.

Q. What about emotional after effects?

A. Some women have problems soon after the abortion. The big problem, however, is usually many years later. This is now called "Post Abortion Syndrome." By virtue of suppression and denial, such women repress any negative feelings for, on average, at least five years. Then, a variety of symptoms emerge, many of which can be very upsetting and even disabling. It is similar to the post-traumatic stress syndrome seen a decade or more later in some combat veterans.

There is treatment for this but many doctors do not know how. If a woman is troubled, she should seek a referral from a pro-life pregnancy help center.

PRO-LIFE MATERIALS

ABORTION, QUESTIONS & ANSWERS..... \$4.25
also, Spanish, Polish, Russian, Czech, Slovak, Lithuanian, Japanese.

ABORTION, QUESTIONS & ANSWERS—THE VIDEO Tape 1 and Tape 2 \$39.95

ABORTION, QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
Side 1 & 2, 71 slides, cassette, manual.....\$30.00
Side 3 & 4, 56 slides, cassette, manual... \$30.00
Complete Set..... \$50.00

ABORTION & SLAVERY..... \$5.50

HOW BABIES GROW—Video for children . \$24.95

WONDER OF SEX—How To Teach Children
English, Dutch, Lithuanian, Russian\$5.95

BROCHURES

LIFE OR DEATH & SUPREME COURT

100 copies \$.20 ea. plus post.
500 copies \$.16 ea. plus post.
1,000 copies \$.15 ea. plus post.
English, Spanish, French, German, Dutch, Italian,
Norwegian, Hungarian, Portuguese, Polish,
Japanese, Chinese, Turkish, Swedish, Greek,
Korean, Russian

DID YOU KNOW—Mini Brochure

100 copies \$.08 ea. plus post.
1,000 copies \$.06 ea. plus post.
English, Spanish, French, German, Italian,
Swedish, Portuguese, Cambodian, Japanese
Russian, Ukrainian

EIGHT WEEK—Mini Brochure

100 copies \$.045 ea. plus post.
1,000 copies \$.04 ea. plus post.
English, Spanish, French, Russian, Ukrainian

MARY'S PREGNANCY • THINKER • NEVER WAS

• CHOICE • BREAST CANCER • RU-480 •

EUTHANASIA • PLANNED PARENTHOOD

100 copies \$.20 ea. plus post.
500 copies \$.16 ea. plus post.
1,000 copies \$.15 ea. plus post.
English, Spanish

available from

HAYES PUBLISHING CO., INC.

6304 Hamilton Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45224

Phone 513 681-7559 Phone/Fax 513-681-9298

Freight or postage will be added to all orders.

- JOBERT, Philippe. O.S.B. *Theological Clarifications of the message of Divine Innocence*. (Unpublished material produced between 1997 and 2005 in the custody of the Divine Innocence Trust, Surbiton, Surrey, England.)
- McKENZIE, L. John. S.J. *Dictionary of the Bible*. London: Chapman, 1965.
- KELLY, D. Francis. *The Mystery We Proclaim - Catechesis for the Third Millennium*. USA: Our Sunday Visitor Books, 1999.
- KLETSCHKA Harold D. M.D. *A Treatise on Human life – An Unalienable Right*. St. Paul MN, U.S.A: Alethos Press LLC, 2003.
- KREEFT, J. Peter. *Catholic Christianity – A complete catechism of Catholic Beliefs based on the catechism of the Catholic Church*. San Francisco, USA: Ignatius Press, 2001.
- L'Osservatore Romano*. (Edition no. 23, 9th June 2004.) Vatican City, Rome: Editorial Management Offices.
- McCARTHY, John Msgr. “Whether aborted children should be claimed as members of the Church.” *Living Tradition*, no. 65. Rome: Oblates of Wisdom, 1997. Also “Further Reflections on the Claiming of aborted Children.” *Living Tradition*, no. 71. Rome: Oblates of Wisdom, 1997.
- NEUNER, J. S.J. – DUPUIS, J. S.J. *The Christian Faith*. (Sixth Revised and Enlarged Edition.) Bangalore, India: Theological Publications, 1996.
- NEWMAN, John Henry. *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. USA: Notre Dame Books, 1989.
- NICHOLS, Aidan, O.P. (ed). *Abortion and Martyrdom*. England, Gracewing, 2002.
- O ‘LEARY, Dale. *The Gender Agenda – Redefining Equality*. USA: Vital Issues Press, 1997.
- RAMSAY, Boniface. *The Later Christian Fathers* England: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- SEALEY M. Margaret. *Ensoulment at Conception: The Need for a Dogma Concerning Man*. (A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of MA of the Open University, Religious and Educational Studies:

Women have a Right to Know, Adverse Effects of Induced Abortion, A Report by the Mother and Child Campaign, 60a Capel Street, Dublin 1, Ireland, 2004.

The Divine Innocence Trust, Surbiton, Surrey, England. Material published in periodicals titled, *Friends of the Child Jesus Newsletter* between 1985 and 1994 and periodicals titled, *The Way of Divine Innocence* between 1994 and 2005.

The World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations. “*Not Acceptable to Deliberately Sacrifice the Life of Any Human Being.*” Statement published on Zenit News Agency on the issue of Human Cloning by Korean Scientists, 26th February 2004.

John Paul II, Pope. *Homily on the Eve of Pentecost. Ecclesial Movements a “Providential Answer”* (Translation from the Italian) Zenit News Agency 30th May 2004.

John Paul II, Pope. *Homily given on Trinity Sunday 6th June 2004 to the Bishops of Switzerland and Prelates from other countries, to lay Catholics and to various other Christian denominations.* L’Osservatore Romano, 9th June 2004, pages 1-7.

John Paul II, Pope. *Letter addressed to Archbishop Vinko Pulijik of Sarajevo, with a message to Bosnian Muslim Women who had been raped in the conflict in that country.* 1993.

Christianising England: Newman, Mill and the Stationary State”. *Culture of Life – Culture of Death.* GORMALLY, Luke (ed). London: Linacre Centre, 2002.

FROST, Francis. (Professeur of dogmatic theology at Ars Diocesan Seminary, France) *Presentation of the doctrine contained in the message of Divine Innocence* (Unpublished material produced in 1992 in the custody of the Divine Innocence Trust, Surbiton, Surrey, England.)

HARRISON, Brian, O.S. (Professor of the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico) “Aborted infants as martyrs: are there wider implications?” (Paper submitted to the Solemes Consultation 1999)
NICHOLS, Aidan. (ed) *Abortion and Martyrdom.* England: Gracewing, 2002.

KREEFT, J. Peter. *Catholic Christianity – A complete catechism of Catholic Beliefs based on the catechism of the Catholic Church*. San Francisco, USA: Ignatius Press, 2001.

L'Osservatore Romano. (Edition no. 23, 9th June 2004.) Vatican City, Rome: Editorial Management Offices.

McCARTHY, John Msgr. “Whether aborted children should be claimed as members of the Church.” *Living Tradition*, no. 65. Rome: Oblates of Wisdom, 1997. Also “Further Reflections on the Claiming of aborted Children.” *Living Tradition*, no. 71. Rome: Oblates of Wisdom, 1997.

NEUNER, J. S.J. – DUPUIS, J. S.J. *The Christian Faith*. (Sixth Revised and Enlarged Edition.) Bangalore, India: Theological Publications, 1996.

NEWMAN, John Henry. *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. USA: Notre Dame Books, 1989.

NICHOLS, Aidan, O.P. (ed). *Abortion and Martyrdom*. England, Gracewing, 2002.

O’LEARY, Dale. *The Gender Agenda – Redefining Equality*. USA: Vital Issues Press, 1997.

RAMSAY, Boniface. *The Later Christian Fathers* England: Oxford University Press, 1972.

SEALEY M. Margaret. *Ensoulement at Conception: The Need for a Dogma Concerning Man*. (A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of MA of the Open University, Religious and Educational Studies: Personal, Moral and Spiritual Development) Birmingham: Maryvale Institute, 2002.

STRONG, James. *Strong’s’s Concordance of the Bible*. Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1990.

STRAVINKAS, Rev. Peter M.J. (ed). *Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia*. Huntington, Indiana USA: Our Sunday Visitor Books, 1997. Sections titled: “Canonization” pages 64 – 66, “Baptism” pages 45 - 48;

MEREDITH, Anthony. S.J. *The Church Fathers* (Course Book on Patristics). Birmingham: Maryvale Institute, 1995.

The Catholic Encyclopaedia. (Volume 7)) London: Caxton Publishing Company, (1910) Section titled “Universalists”, page 181.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary, New Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

CUDDEBACK, Kateryna Fedoryka. “Population control: the global contours of the culture of death”. *Culture of Life – Culture of Death*. GORMALLY, Luke (ed). London: Linacre Centre, 2002.

DYER, J. George. *Limbo – Unsettled Question*. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964.

FARMER, Ann. *The Language of Life*. (Grounds for Abortion Act 1967) UK: St. Paul’s, 1994.

FENLON, Dermot. “De-Christianising England: Newman, Mill and the Stationary State”. *Culture of Life – Culture of Death*. GORMALLY, Luke (ed). London: Linacre Centre, 2002.

FROST, Francis. (Professeur of dogmatic theology at Ars Diocesan Seminary, France) *Presentation of the doctrine contained in the message of Divine Innocence* (Unpublished material produced in 1992 in the custody of the Divine Innocence Trust, Surbiton, Surrey, England.)

HARRISON, Brian, O.S. (Professor of the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico) “Aborted infants as martyrs: are there wider implications?” (Paper submitted to the Solemes Consultation 1999)
NICHOLS, Aidan. (ed) *Abortion and Martyrdom*. England: Gracewing, 2002.

JOBERT, Philippe. O.S.B. *Theological Clarifications of the message of Divine Innocence*. (Unpublished material produced between 1997 and 2005 in the custody of the Divine Innocence Trust, Surbiton, Surrey, England.)

McKENZIE, L. John. S.J. *Dictionary of the Bible*. London: Chapman, 1965.

KELLY, D. Francis. *The Mystery We Proclaim - Catechesis for the Third Millennium*. USA: Our Sunday Visitor Books, 1999.

KLETSCHKA Harold D. M.D. *A Treatise on Human life – An Unalienable Right*. St. Paul MN, U.S.A: Alethos Press LLC, 2003.

Pontifical Council for the Family, *Ethical and Pastoral Dimensions of Population Trends, in Serving the Human Family.* (The Holy See at the Major UN Conferences; New York: The Path to Peace Foundation, 1997)

Congregation for the Clergy. *General Directory for Catechesis.* CTS Publications, London, 1997.

Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *The Church and Internet* CTS Publications, London, 2002.

Papal Documents of Pope Paul VI:

Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, proclaiming the Gospel. CTS Publications, London, 1975.

Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (2 Dec. 1984, 17: AAS 77 (1985), 221; cf. Paul VI, Address to the Members of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, (September 1967): AAS 59 (1967), 962) CTS Publications, London, 1985.

Papal Documents of Pope John Paul II:

Encyclical Letter, *Familiaris Consortio*, The Christian Family in the Modern World, CTS Publications, London, 1981.

Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*, The Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World. CTS Publications, London, 1988.

Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Missio*, On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate. CTS Publications, London, 1990.

Encyclical Letter, *Centesimus Annus*, The Social Teaching of the Church. Editions Paulines, Canada, 1991.

Encyclical Letter, *Veritatis Splendor*. CTS Publications, London, 1993.

Apostolic Exhortation, *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*, At the Coming of the Millennium. CTS, London, 1994.

Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*. CTS Publications, London, 1995.

Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, Catechesis in our time. CTS Publications, London, 1979.

Books and Articles.

AQUINAS, Thomas. *Summa Theologica.* (Volume III) Texas, USA: Christian Classics, 1981.

BRISTOW, Peter. *The Moral Dignity of Man.* Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1993.

Bibliography.

Sacred Scripture.

The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition. (CTS Publications, 1966)

Conciliar and other Magisterial Documents.

The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II. (1975): St. Paul Editions, U.S.A.:

Constitution on Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium), 1963.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), 1964.

Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum), 1965.

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes), 1965.

Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church (Ad Gentes Divinitus), 1965.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum Vitae* (Instruction on respect for human life in its origin and on the dignity of procreation). CTS Publications, London, 1987.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration on Procured Abortion.* CTS Publications, London, 1990.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *The Message of Fatima.* (Theological Commentary of Cardinal Ratzinger, section titled, 'Public revelation and private revelations – their theological status.') CTS Publications, London, 2000.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Catechism of the Catholic Church.* Veritas, Dublin, 1994.

Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Divine Office of the Church.* (English Edition), Collins, London, 1974.

Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *The Roman Missal.* (Official English Text. Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI.) Collins Goodliffe Neale Ltd. London, 1984.

The Commission goes on to put forward ways by which ‘ 84. unbaptised infants who die may perhaps be united to Christ.

85. a) Broadly, we may discern in those infants who themselves suffer and die a saving conformity to Christ in his own death, and a companionship with him. Christ himself on the Cross bore the weight of all of humanity's sin and death, and all suffering and death thereafter is an engagement with his own enemy (cf. 1 Cor 15:26), a participation in his own battle, in the midst of which we can find him alongside us (cf. Dan 3:24-25 [91-92]; Rom 8:31-39; 2 Tim 4:17). His Resurrection is the source of humanity's hope (cf. 1 Cor 15:20); in him alone is there life in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10...

Finally the Commission refers to the Holy Innocents in relation to children who suffer and die: 86. b) Some of the infants who suffer and die do so as victims of violence. In their case, we may readily refer to the example of the Holy Innocents and discern an analogy in the case of these infants to the baptism of blood which brings salvation. Albeit unknowingly, the Holy Innocents suffered and died on account of Christ; their murderers were seeking to kill the infant Jesus. Just as those who took the lives of the Holy Innocents were motivated by fear and selfishness, so the lives particularly of unborn babies today are often endangered by the fear or selfishness of others. In that sense, they are in solidarity with the Holy Innocents. Moreover, they are in solidarity with the Christ who said: “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40). How vital it is for the Church to proclaim the hope and generosity that are intrinsic to the Gospel and essential for the protection of life.

Postscript

In 2007 the International Theological Commission called by John Paul II in 2005 gave its findings in a document called “The Hope of Salvation for Infants who Die Without Baptism” In it we see the Church is moving nearing to showing that the infants who die without baptism are in heaven as we see in the following statement.

‘The conclusion of this study is that there are theological and liturgical reasons to hope that infants who die without baptism may be saved and brought into eternal happiness, even if there is not an explicit teaching on this question found in Revelation. However, none of the considerations proposed in this text to motivate a new approach to the question may be used to negate the necessity of baptism, nor to delay the conferral of the sacrament.’

We are of course here dealing with those children who are violently put to death in opposition to the word of God and the truth taught by the Church. It is important to show how they are martyr witnesses to Christ, the Way the Truth and the Life. Because they witness to the truth taught by the Church and the truth found in the word of God their witness is also to the ordinary means of salvation for those who have put the children to death, that same witness through the Church is proclaimed universally through out the whole world and there is the call of the successor of St Peter “Repent and be baptised and believe in the Gospel.” Therefore by the Church claiming these children she does not negate the necessity of baptism but proclaims that necessity universally. They also witness to the source of their own baptism, who is Christ. They are washed in His blood and their blood witnesses to His all saving blood.

The Commission goes on to say: ‘Rather, there are reasons to hope that God will save these infants precisely because it was not possible to do for them what would have been most desirable— to baptize them [with water baptism] in the faith of the Church and incorporate them visibly into the Body of Christ. ‘

It seems to me that the claiming is a way to show visibly to the whole world that the children are incorporated into the Body of Christ and are part of the communion of saints.

The Commission states that all live in some kind of relation to Christ himself in different degrees of explicitness (cf.:LG 16) We have shown that the children put to death before birth have in various ways a conformity to Christ and a solidarity with Him and that ‘since Christ died for all, and since all are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine [*cumque vocatio hominis ultima revera una sit, scilicet divina*], we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery” (GS 22).

It has been shown that martyrdom and its baptism of blood seems to provide a way for these innocent victims to be incorporated into God's saving plan. Through the claiming, the children witness to the love and mercy of God. In and through Christ it is shown that the children are not forgotten and God takes them to himself. The claiming is a proclamation of love, mercy and justice, it will show forth the intercessory power of the children, once they are recognised as part of the communion of saints and would be a force for the conversion of those involved in the deaths of the children. As 'companions of the first Holy Innocents' and claimed by the Mother Church, the treasury of the merits of their martyrdom may then be drawn upon more abundantly by all peoples world- wide. These new holy innocents, as witnesses to Jesus Christ, 'the Way, the Truth and the Life', when given voice in the universal Church, would proclaim more eloquently his Victory over sin and death. Recognition of their martyrdom would give world-wide testimony to the truth and the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church, proclaiming to the world the right Saviour, Christ, the right authority, the Church and the right doctrine, giving glory to God, glory to the Church and show the world the children enjoy the glory of heaven for all eternity and the beatific vision of their God.

‘initial proclamation’ of the Gospel and a witness to the Christian message universally in an unprecedented way. It would give the Church the opportunity of catechising people from all nations in Catholic doctrine, faith and morals and with the aid of modern means of social communication any formal proclamation by the Church’s Magisterium on this issue will certainly be heard all over the world.

It is evident from the theology and pastoral consequences that a development of this nature that seeks to resolve a painful moral issue such as abortion will have repercussions but with the appropriate catechesis to accompany it, raising these children to the Altar of the Catholic Church could have very positive missionary implications bringing spiritual and emotional comfort to millions of people.

The Christian call to salvation and to the Gospel is always via witness. Witness is an essential element of bringing the Gospel to the world. From the theology it appears that the children’s martyr witness to the truth can only be facilitated and given voice through the Catholic Church in her universal motherly role towards all mankind. The effects of this proclamation points the successor of St. Peter and the Apostles to a new Pentecostal witness to the nations, giving hope in what appears to be great defeat in face of ‘a culture of death.’ (EV n. 12) It is in this context that Pope John Paul II’s words given on Trinity Sunday, 6th June 2004 have a prophetic ring to them; “I ask the Lord to be a witness of hope among you, a witness of that hope that “does not disappoint” (Rom.5.4) (because it is founded on God’s love, “poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Rom 5:5). Today, the world is especially in need of ‘a supplement of hope!’¹⁵⁷ This hope is founded ultimately on God’s Love, and on sound doctrine that has come from, Sacred Scripture, Tradition and the teaching Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

This thesis has put forward that the raising of these children to the Altar of the Catholic Church, could be a great missionary action towards all nations fulfilling Christ’s words; “that they may all be one.” (Jn 17:22) From the theological evidence that has come to light and what the Church herself teaches regarding evangelization, there appears to be a sound foundation for the Church to respond to this development. The claiming can contribute much to the Church’s missionary work and allow her to go forward in this new millennium with renewed vigour and confidence.

¹⁵⁷ Pope John Paul II, *Homily given on Trinity Sunday 6th June 2004 to the Bishops of Switzerland and Prelates from other countries, to lay Catholics and to various other Christian denominations.* L’Osservatore Romano, 9th June 2004, Pages 1-7.

the Cross. Like all martyrs it is Christ's power working in them that enables the weak to bear witness to him¹⁵⁶. It cannot be said that the children are separated from the love of God for St. Paul tells us that nothing can separate us from the love of God. (Rom.8.35) God's love is not sterile towards these children but is surely vigorous and active towards their salvation. Why would God allow millions of children made in His Image to go into eternity with the stain of original sin or be the play things of the forces of evil. Christ died for all including these children and those who have put them to death.

There is also the theological and philosophical question concerning the personhood of these children. Many procured abortions and therapeutic experiments on embryos continue to be carried out under the pretext that there is no person present but just a developing biological mass. Yet, in the light of what the Incarnation means for all human persons, from natural conception onwards, this denial of personhood could even be considered a heresy. Philosophically, advances in science and particularly our deeper understanding of DNA, show that there is an organised form existing from the very beginning of human life that leads us to conclude that there is a human person present from the moment of conception.

In the positive case we have looked into some of the key theological issues and related themes involved in this development that affect the children in some way. Themes such as Baptism, martyrdom, virgin souls, the name given to the children in the Charism of Divine Innocence "Mercy Reigns" the children's mission in the Church, righteousness, the Holy Innocents, the Church's role and the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church, have been considered within the context of sacred Scripture, Tradition and Magisterium. Together these seem show a wide spectrum of theological evidence for the Church to seriously consider this development and confidently allow the cause of these children to flower in the Church.

These theological considerations have helped to prepare the ground for an important goal of this thesis, the Church's mission and her work of evangelization and catechesis. Christ told his Apostles to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel to the whole world. The claiming of the children killed before birth, it seems, can be shown to be fully part of that evangelization process and in harmony with it. Considering the Church's missionary and catechetical directives in Chapter 5, we are led to understand that 'initial proclamation' has an "irreplaceable" role in the work of evangelization. We can conclude from the possible effects of such a development that the claiming of these children would represent an

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Preface for Martyrs, Roman Missal, 1971.

the reasons for that hope, (c.c.c.1261) remembering that St. Paul tells us our hope will not be disappointed. Rom: 5:5

Before entering upon the theological issue involved it was necessary to look at the origins of this inspiration in the light of the Church's teaching on private revelation. It is clear from her teaching that the Church recognises and welcomes the ongoing inspiration of the Holy Spirit for the growth and well-being of the life of the Church, be it through charisms or a deeper understanding of Revelation. Through theological development and the *sensus fidei* and the Magisterium the Church seeks to decide what constitutes an authentic development. True Catholic theological development demands that it is in harmony with Scripture, Tradition and Magisterial teaching. It seem to us that this development shows that harmony. In 2004, Pope John Paul II asked the International Theological Commission to consider the question of the fate of infants who die before Baptism and here we see a move within the Church to grapple with this question. Having looked at the content of this inspiration, some theologians believe that there is evidence to show that this charism can make a positive contribution to this issue. Is God speaking to the Church and showing, in a mighty way, that the Church's prayers and the work of pro-life organizations has been answered.

It is to be expected however that such a development will have to face rigorous theological scrutiny and opposition. The objections covered above consider some of the theological issues involved. The replies to these objections appeal to existing Catholic doctrine and are consistent with sound theological debate. Central to this is the question, can these children be considered martyrs and if so how? While looking to the tradition we must look to the fundamental roots of martyrdom for the answer. The subjective criteria traditionally used in what we classically consider to constitute the definition of martyrdom is not sufficient in this case i.e. death in *odium fidei* because the intentions of those involved are various. However, the children objectively die for Christ because those who kill the innocent transgress the natural moral law that is written on the human heart. Why then are not all innocent victims of murder martyrs? We see in the case of aborted children that there is no doubt as to their innocence and as victims they are totally helpless. The crime against the children put to death before birth is organized by governments, abortion clinics, hospitals, doctors and drug companies to serve their own agendas. The children are deprived of the ordinary means of salvation. It is Christ's choice of them through the gift of grace, the work of the Holy Spirit and their conformity to Christ Crucified and God's love for them that bestows on them the gift of martyrdom. They are washed in the blood of Christ and their own blood in a baptism of blood and love flowing from Christ upon

Chapter 6. Conclusion.

In this thesis we have examined the theological and catechetical implications of the Church proclaiming the martyrdom of aborted and embryo children killed before birth. It has been shown that such a wide reaching and indeed for many, a radical development, would in turn have many other implications, doctrinal and pastoral. While concentrating on key issues related to the development, it was also necessary at the outset to look at the present situation and scale of abortion and embryo experimentation today, so that one can appreciate the seriousness of the moral breakdown that has become acceptable in so many societies globally. The effects of abortion cannot be underestimated, along with the hidden physical and psychological health problems suffered by individuals directly involved in abortion there are wider serious demographic disturbances which can affect the future stability of countries and the imbalance in the populations of nations is already causing deep concern. We cannot go on killing millions of innocent children, God in His justice will ask for an account of the innocent blood that has been spilt worldwide. The spiritual effects on individuals, families and nations is considerable.

Having taken an overview of the Catholic Church's position on this matter, the Magisterial and papal documents which clearly condemn abortion and the 'culture of death' mentality, it is evident that the Church has remained far from silent on this issue and consistently upholds the dignity of the human person from conception to natural death. Why then has the Church's message not seemed to have changed the situation regarding attacks on human life? The reasons are as complex and numerous as the individuals and circumstances involved in the killing of the unborn. This problem is seen however as predominately a moral question. The proposal for the Catholic Church to claim those killed before birth as Companion Martyrs of the first Holy Innocents contains within it important elements in the defence of life and promotes a Christian 'culture of life'. If we are to defend life from the Christian tradition it must be at the deepest level, which is based upon the revelation of Jesus Christ who has conquered sin and death. So in addition to the theology regarding the morality of killing the unborn, it is necessary to explore the theology concerning the status of its victims for whom Christ came to give life more abundantly. The salvation of these children is fundamentally important in the fight against abortion. If we defend their right to life must they not be given life in the Church for all to see? The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that we are allowed to hope that there is a way of salvation for these children. We have a duty to look into

Cultural changes are continually taking place in our society and many in the Catholic Church from a standpoint of faith, are finding themselves ill equipped to cope with new ideas and worldviews. They feel their faith is being undermined by the society they live in. Secularism tends to attack those values that traditionally upheld a religious outlook on life in the family and in society as a whole. Abortion, embryo experiments and the culture of death are symptoms of a widespread disregard for the moral law. Ideologies contrary to the Gospel message and Catholic teaching are often imposed at political and social levels that gradually influence whole societies. The claiming gives the Church an opportunity to firmly restate the Gospel teaching, the dignity of the human persons and their eternal destiny. It invites those who reject or compromise the faith, and those who know nothing about the faith to 'come and see' (Jn 1:39).

There are many in the Church whose faith is strong and inspired by the vision and optimism of the John Paul II and encouraged by Pope Benedict XVI. For these people and especially those working in prolife areas, the proclamation of Christ's Victory in these children through the Universal Church will give great joy and positive encouragement. They will see the motherly care of the Church for God's people, the power and authority of the Magisterium proclaiming the truth and a doctrinal answer to the holocaust of abortion and the killing of these children. It will show the faithful everywhere that their belief in Christ and His Church is well founded and that Christ's Victory over all sin and death has been shown to the world in all its beauty and power.

Church. In turn it will help individuals to better appreciate the importance of baptism as initiation into the Mystical Body of Christ, what it means for each of the faithful to share in the prophet, priestly and kingly role of Christ and how each of the baptised are called to fulfil their baptismal promises in their lives.

Evangelising Activity and the Dignity of the Human Person.

The General Directory for Catechesis, n.19 states: ‘The evangelising activity of the Church in the field of human rights has, as its undeniable objective, the task of revealing the inviolable dignity of every human person. In a certain sense, “it is the central and unifying task of service which the Church, and the lay faithful in her, are called to render to the human family”, catechesis must prepare them for this task.’¹⁵⁵ The pastoral care of millions of people involved in the deaths of these children is at stake here. It is a missionary area that the Church needs to enter with vigour, ‘to seek out the lost and bring back those who have strayed from the truth (cf. Lk 19:10). The claiming is an affirmation of the dignity of every human person – the dignity and personhood of the children, the dignity of motherhood and fatherhood and the dignity of holy marriage.

Catechesis for conversion and re-evangelization.

Those people, who may be touched by the claiming and are moved to seek admittance into the Catholic Church, can be directed towards the new Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. This was established from the directives of Vatican II and is an invaluable preparation for those seeking to become Catholics and to receive formation in the faith. Various methodologies and formats for instruction have been prepared with a view to helping catechumens prepare for initiation into the Church. The success of such programmes has highlighted the hunger and need for ongoing catechesis, not only for those recently initiated, but also for the greater majority of the faithful. As well as those outside the Church there are members of the Catholic Church who themselves have been involved in abortion and lapsed Catholics who have rejected the Church’s teaching in this area, all need re-evangelization. The claiming can be an opportunity to reach people who may have become indifferent about their faith, catechesis stemming from the claiming can help to enliven it and give them a new enthusiasm to live the faith and witness to it in the world.

¹⁵⁵ John Paul II. *Christifideles Laici*, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation (hereafter CL). CTS Publications, London, 1988, n. 37; Cf. John Paul II. *Centesimus Annus*, Encyclical Letter (hereafter CA). CTS Publications, London, 1991, n. 47; AAS 83 (1991).

Motherhood of the Church be the measuring-rule of her active compassion) to the depth of human need. And of all the needy, those about to be aborted – already potential members of the Church – are the weakest and most abandoned. [I]f aborted children enjoy a special place within the range of Mary’s spiritual Motherhood, the Church, of which the compassionate Mother of God is the exemplar, must likewise have a special regard for these infants.’¹⁵¹

‘We believe in the ‘Holy Spirit the Lord the giver of life,’¹⁵² The Spirit who first gave life to the children cannot be defeated by the sins of those who have killed them. The ‘Spirit reaches the depths of every thing even the depths of God’ (1Cor 2:10). The sanctifying Spirit can therefore reach these children who ‘do not know how to pray’ yet through their Advocate can ‘cry out in their need’, “Abba Father”(Gal 4:6). Through the Spirit and in Christ, ‘God can raise up children to Abraham from what the world considers as lifeless stones.’ (Mt 3:9).

We believe in ‘the communion of saints’, the claiming shows how the children are members of that communion and how they become recognised members of the Church. It shows that we can seek their intercession like the other saints. The children’s martyr witness calls those who have killed them to conversion, to the ‘forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting’.¹⁵³ From the Creed it seems that if the Church raises these children to the Altar, she is presented with an opportunity to affirm and give catechesis on the Creed. Through the prophetic witness of these children all are invited to believe in ‘the One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church acquired by Christ at the price of His blood’, and to ‘the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.’¹⁵⁴

Raising awareness to the theology of Vatican II.

We can see how Vatican II emphasised the theology of how all the baptised share in Christ’s triple office of Prophet, Priest and King and are called to actively participate in these offices. (Cf. LG ns.10, 12, 13, 33, 34, 35) The catechesis that accompanies the claiming would need to explain how this is so for the aborted children and its implications for the rest of the faithful. In this way people can better understand the benefits the children bring to the Church and indeed to all humanity through their prophet witness to the Truth that comes from God and is taught by the

¹⁵¹ *Abortion and Martyrdom*, pages 5-6.

¹⁵² Nicene Creed.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Modern media can provide a powerful means for the Church to make known, the reasons for the liturgical act and on going catechesis.

We see from the recent events of the death of John Paul II and the election of Pope Benedict XVI, that world social media networks can be a positive instrument for broadcasting the Gospel message and helping the Church's mission reach an unprecedented number of people, believers and non-believers alike. The truth speaks for itself and touches hearts, as we saw by the numbers of people who responded to the warmth and love of John Paul II, someone who proclaimed the truth in season and out of season.

Creedal Catechesis.

Creedal Catechesis can be an effective tool to help people understand how the children are included in God's plan of salvation. Our profession of faith is a summary of all we believe and the children are included in this: 'We believe in God the Father Almighty'¹⁴⁷ - God cannot be ultimately defeated by the holocaust of abortion or by man's inhumanity to man with regard to these children. To the secular world God and His Church seem to be defeated in this matter but the raising of these children to martyr status within the Church refutes that assumption. We believe in one 'Lord Jesus Christ'¹⁴⁸ and that through Him all men are saved. The children have not rejected God or committed any actual sin so they cannot be outside Christ's saving power. Certainly those who have killed them cannot decide their eternal fate in God; 'Where sin abounds grace abounds all the more' (Rom 5:20).

We profess that Christ is 'born of the Virgin Mary'. The Motherly role of Mary is intimately united to the Motherly role of the Church for she is a type of the Church. (Cf. LG ns. 64, 65) The Mother of God and the Mother Church constantly seek the salvation of all God's children. 'These aborted infants may be held to stand in a special relation also to the Mother of God whose appointment to be Mother of the Church (John 19:26-27) is inseparable from the compassion she showed at the cross when the 'sword' of Simeon's prophecy pierced her soul (Luke 2:35).'¹⁴⁹ The spiritual ('hidden and mystical'¹⁵⁰) wounds that the Mother of Christ suffered beneath the Cross, when she too 'died', inwardly, in the death of the Fruit of her womb, have power to succour in proportion (if Mary's

¹⁴⁷ Nicene Creed.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 5.

¹⁵⁰ Term widely used for Mary in the inspiration of Divine Innocence.

The place of Liturgy in catechesis.

We understand that Catholic liturgy is based upon the priestly office of Jesus Christ and above all upon his redemptive sacrifice, which is perpetuated in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In and through the liturgy, the faithful can join in Christ's prayer to His Father, to participate in and live out the mystery of salvation. Liturgy in fact is the end purpose of catechesis since catechesis has the role 'not simply to pass on correct doctrine, but above all to initiate its recipients into a living faith.'¹⁴⁵ It directs people to communion with God through the Paschal Mystery; Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of the liturgical and sacramental activity of the Church, for it is in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of men.' (CT n. 23)

Liturgy is thus the pre-eminent place for catechesis. The liturgical act of the Catholic Church claiming these children for Christ and His Church and proclaiming them martyr saints, would have far reaching effects especially for those directly affected by this development. With conversion they are called into communion with the Church, to partake in her liturgical life; to share in her sacramental life and in her prayer and praise. The very act of claiming these children is an act of praising God and acknowledging His goodness towards both the children and perpetrators. Moreover it touches on many elements of salvation not only for the children and those involved in their deaths but for people everywhere at whatever level of the understanding they may have of the Catholic faith. Liturgical celebration and healing services, homilies, prayers, hymns etc. can be opportunities to introduce people to Catholic initiation and deeper conversion.

Means of communication.

The Church encourages the use of the media in spreading the Gospel message. In the document '*Ethics in Communications*', the Pontifical Council for Social Communications states: 'The Church's approach to the means of social communication is fundamentally positive [and] encouraging. ...she considers these instruments to be not only products of human genius but also great gifts from God and true signs of the times.'¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Martimort A.G. *Principles of the Liturgy*. USA: Collegeville Books, 1978, page 276.

¹⁴⁶ *Ethics in Communications*, (Rome, June 2000) n. 4, *Ethics in Internet* (Rome, February 2002), *The Church and Internet* (Rome, February 2002) Pontifical Council for Social Communications, Rome, June 2000, cf. *Inter Mirifica*, 1; *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 45; *Redemptoris Missio*, 37.

who have killed them, calling them into unity and showing that the children themselves are part of the communion of saints.

Teaching Tools for Catechesis.

In 1992 the Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum* n.3 presented the Catechism of the Catholic Church as “a sure and authentic reference text for teaching catholic doctrine” and recommended that pastors and the faithful “use it assiduously in fulfilling their mission of proclaiming the faith and calling people to the Gospel of life.” The Church encourages all the faithful to appropriate the content of the faith as presented in the Catechism. It is against this background that the new General Directory for Catechesis has been produced. Along with the documents of Vatican II and subsequent documents since then, the Church has at her disposal all the tools needed for catechesis in terms of the directives and the guidance necessary for catechising people from all nations.

The GDC lays down directives and guidance with regard to the way catechesis should be conducted in the Church and in the face of societies of diverse cultures (‘inculturation’). It considers the content of the Gospel message (as presented in the new Catechism) and specifies how the faith is to be taught based on divine pedagogy, to those of diverse situations and contexts. To be effective, catechesis requires a good understanding of the context in which it is taking place i.e. the faith and understanding of people, and their culture. To make the most of the missionary opportunity of the claiming would require a systematic approach to catechesis at diocesan and parochial levels, for all age groups. The Church would need to be ready with answers for those who seek clarification in the wake of the claiming. Priests and catechists would need to have a coherent understanding of the theology of the claiming; and how the children are part of the communion of saints.

The striking nature of declaring children killed in abortion as martyrs to the truth of the right to their God given life, to Christ, the Way the Truth and the life, to the word of God, especially the Commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’; could stir those faithful who may be weak in terms of catechetical formation to receive further instruction so as to understand better the doctrinal basis of such an act by the Church. In such an unprecedented missionary field every member of the Church can be apostolic and missionary since we understand that ‘[c]atechesis is a responsibility of the entire Church community.’ (GDC. n. 220)

received in virtue of Jesus Christ, that '[h]uman nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, in him, [Jesus Christ] has been raised in us to a dignity beyond compare. They are unlikely to have heard John Paul II's statement in *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 104: 'It is precisely in the "flesh" of every person that Christ continues to reveal himself and to enter into fellowship with us, so that rejection of human life, in whatever form that rejection takes, is really a rejection of Christ.' (Cf. Mat 25: 40) Awakening people to the reality of this mystery requires a bold preaching of the truth.¹⁴³ Many of these people are lapsed Catholics who have fallen away from the faith, others are non-Christians who may "have been shaped by the climate of secularism and ethical relativism"¹⁴⁴ and world views that are anti life.

The claiming would open a door for a comprehensive catechesis, revealing the beauty and light of Revelation, it would proclaim the saving Will of God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, Redeemer of all mankind, the institution and authority of the Church Christ founded and her teaching authority in matters of faith and morals. It would proclaim the truth of the Commandments, the dignity of the human person, the doctrines of original sin and baptism, the Church's doctrine on the other Sacraments, etc. it prepares the way for an exposition of Catholic doctrine through a catechetical framework.

Of course all areas of the faith cannot be taught in one public act of declaration, yet it could be a necessary catalyst to begin a pastoral catechesis universally on all levels. It would provide a public forum to refute moral relativism and erroneous world views (some of which are behind the cultural acceptance of abortion and attacks on the sanctity of human life). It would put forward the Catholic world-view as a coherent teaching upholding the Gospel of life. The claiming would present new opportunities for ecumenical dialogue as it touches upon key areas of Christian teaching, for example how we are saved in Christ, the role of baptism, nature of original sin, the theology of grace, the last things, and the role of the Church. Although these areas are sensitive in the ecumenical dialogue the claiming gives the Church the opportunity to enter more deeply into these areas. The claiming of these children for Christ would witness to the tender motherly role of the Mother Church in embracing these children as her own, and the offer of reconciling those

¹⁴³ Cf. Romans 10:14 -17: 'But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent?..... So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.'

¹⁴⁴ John Paul II. Apostolic Exhortation, *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*. CTS Publications London, 1994, n. 36b; GS n.19c.

‘devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.’ (Acts 2:42).

In the wake of St. Peter’s witness we see that thousands were converted. The claiming appears to have many elements of this initial Pentecostal proclamation of the Gospel and it is hoped that a similar effect would flow from it. It is for the whole Church to believe Christ’s words “What you ask of the Father in My Name he will give you” (Jn 16:23) and to pray in her liturgy to the Holy Spirit, to pour out His gifts and to inspire conversions in the wake of the Magisterium making such a proclamation. It was the power of the Holy Spirit that gave the first Apostles the ability to bear witness to Jesus with boldness.¹⁴⁰ The public witness of Peter’s Successor and the successors of the Apostles united to that of the children’s witness, needs to be heard with regard to the children’s salvation. This proclamation by its very nature needs to be public so that the power of the claiming reaches all nations and peoples, calling them to conversion.¹⁴¹

This public witness has a special place in the work of evangelisation as ‘people today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers,[.....] and in life and action than in theories.’ (RM n. 42) The claiming would present a unique ecclesial witness for these times. People all over the world who may have been conditioned by a ‘culture of death’ mentality need to know that in terminating the life of unborn children they have crucified Christ anew; ‘What you do to the least of my brethren you do to me’ (Mt 25:40). They need to know that through his resurrection and as Lord of the living and the dead (Rom 14:9), Jesus Christ has raised up these children to be with him in paradise and is calling those who have killed them to this happiness through repentance and conversion.

It is a fact that millions of individuals from every nation are implicated in the deaths of these children to different degrees of culpability. There are many others indirectly involved in this moral breakdown especially those guilty of the sin of complacency and indifference,¹⁴² because evil is allowed to triumph when people remain silent. These people are the responsibility of the Mother Church and part of her mission ‘ad gentes’. These people could not be aware of the wonderful dignity humanity has

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Acts 2:29; 4:13; 29, 31; 9:27-28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8, 26; 28:31.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Mt 5:15: “Nor do men light a lamp and put in under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.”

¹⁴² Cf. RM n. 35: ‘One of the most serious reasons for the lack of interest in the missionary task is a widespread indifferentism, which sad to say, is found also among Christians. It is based on incorrect theological perspectives and is characterised by a religious relativism which leads to the belief that “one religion is as good as another”.’

unfolds the mission of Christ, who was sent to evangelise the poor'. (CCC n. 852)

Speaking of this complex field of mission and the importance of initial proclamation, John Paul II tells us that 'initial proclamation has a central and irreplaceable role, since it introduces man "into the mystery of the love of God, who invites him to enter into a personal relationship with himself in Christ.'¹³⁹ He adds 'the people who have not yet received an initial proclamation of Christ constitute the majority of mankind'. (RM n. 40) A radical event such as the claiming with such a global outreach could change this. Raising these children, who are from every nation, to the Altar of the Catholic Church, would manifest a great action of the Holy Spirit to all peoples everywhere. This would require catechesis to accompany the process and to continue after the claiming, for the understanding of the people so that "[t]hey shall see who have never been told of him, and they shall understand who have never heard of him.' (Is 52:15)

New principles for catechesis have emerged in the Church since Vatican II. The *General Catechetical Directory* was promulgated in April 1971 and the *General Directory for Catechesis* in 1997. In the intervening years and with the promulgation of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* in 1975 a great enrichment in catechesis has taken place with many significant developments. As new principles emerged, catechesis would in future be understood as firmly situated in the essential mission of the Church – the mission of evangelization, which is a principal purpose of the claiming.

We understand that the priority of the Church's mission is the salvation of all people. At the first Pentecost we see how Peter and the Apostles witnessed to the risen Christ, calling the people to repentance and belief in the Gospel. Peter told the people that they had crucified the Christ. The people heard the Apostle's witness in their own language and when they were told of the seriousness of what they had done in putting Jesus to death, 'they were cut to the heart' and asked, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' (Acts 2:37). Peter told them to: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children..."(Acts 2:39) We see here that Peter's discourse consisted of both initial proclamation and catechesis and the people responded by being baptised a sign of repentance and conversion then they

¹³⁹ Ibid; Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church. *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*. St. Paul Editions, U.S.A., 1975, ns. 13,14.

peoples and it is an ongoing part of the Church's mission of evangelization. In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*, On Catechesis in our Time, Pope John Paul II refers to catechesis as a "moment", 'a very remarkable one – in the process of evangelisation.'¹³⁷ The Church teaches that the 'fundamental task' of catechesis is to present Jesus Christ as the fullness of Revelation 'and everything in relation to him.' (GDC n. 98) Catechesis aims 'to encourage a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith' (GDC n. 65) and strives to instruct 'the true disciple of Christ by means of a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and the message of Our Lord Jesus Christ.' (CT n.19)

Having considered the likely effects of the claiming, it seems that the action of the Church in proclaiming the martyrdom of children put to death before birth and raising them to the altar would most certainly be 'a very remarkable moment in the process of evangelisation. It would mark this "moment" as part of 'a rich, complex and dynamic reality'.(CT n. 19) It would present the Church with an unprecedented¹³⁸ catechetical opportunity to proclaim the Resurrection and the saving work of Christ and His Church. As a "moment" of initial proclamation it points all peoples to the Gospel; to conversion, repentance, and to the ordinary means of salvation through the Church's sacramental system.

In his Encyclical on the Church's Mission *Redemptoris Missio*, Pope John Paul II speaks of proclamation as being the 'permanent priority of mission [...a mission that proclaims] that in Jesus Christ ... salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God's grace and mercy'(RM n.44). The claiming is the proclamation of the truth and points to many areas of Catholic doctrine, it proclaims the Gospel of life, the truth of the Commandments and it is a call to repentance to all who reject or disobey the laws of God and the Church. It would also show forth God's love for all humanity and His justice and mercy. Proclamation 'has Christian conversion as its aim [which is] a gift of God, a work of the Blessed Trinity. It is the Spirit who opens people's hearts so that they can believe in Christ and "confess him" (cf. 1Cor 12:3).'

(RM n.46) As "principle catechist", the Holy Spirit inspires all catechetical activity and after the seed has been sown helps in propagation. The Holy Spirit is the protagonist, 'the principal agent of the whole of the Church's mission. It is He who leads the Church on her missionary paths. This mission continues and, in the course of history,

¹³⁷ John Paul II. Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, On Catechesis in our Time (hereafter CT) CTS Publications, London, 1979. n. 63; n. 18; cf. n. 20c.

¹³⁸ Cf. Unprecedented in terms of the vast number of martyrs proclaimed by the Church in one liturgical act. As initial proclamation it would immediately points all peoples to the Gospel and to the ordinary means of salvation; to conversion and repentance through the Catholic Church's sacramental system.

included in God's saving plan: Justice is met for these children, mercy is given to them and offered to those who have killed them,¹³⁵ sinners are called to repentance, glory is given to God, to the children, and the Mother Church as she is adorned with so many martyr saints. Satisfaction is made to God for the children with regard to original sin; the dignity of the motherly and fatherly role of men and women is shown its proper light. The forces of evil are defeated and praise is given to God, while the discipline, authority and teachings of the Church are proclaimed in a merciful, just and loving way

The main focus of the last two chapters has been on the theological issues surrounding claiming these children as martyrs. It is necessary to show more explicitly its compatibility to the doctrinal teaching of the Church. Evangelisation seeks to transmit this teaching to all peoples and it follows that such an action by the Church would have missionary, evangelizing and catechetical implications for the Church's mission to the nations.

Chapter 5. The mission of the Church - evangelization, initial proclamation, and catechesis.

Those who have been raised with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph 2:1, 5) are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17; 1 Cor 10:11) but realisation of the Resurrection in this life is not yet complete. Hence, the need for teaching the faith and encouragement in a way of life that is pleasing to God, through the Church's instruction and catechesis. In this context the Church fully understands her responsibility to evangelise. The Church's General Directory for Catechesis states: 'The Church exists in order to evangelise, that is "the carrying forth of the Good News to every sector of the human race so that by its strength it may enter into the hearts of men and renew the human race.'" (GDC n. 46) The Holy Spirit is the principle cause of this work and 'sustains the task of proclaiming the Gospel in every corner of the world.'¹³⁶

We understand Divine Revelation as God's intervention in human history to help men and women to know and live the truth with certainty and give them the grace to do so. Ignorance of the truth has brought great suffering to many. Catechesis has the role of communicating this knowledge to all

¹³⁵ Cf. St. Paul, entirely approved of the killing of St. Steven but now enjoys heaven in his company. What joy for repentant parents and others who approved the killing of these children, that one day they may through God's love and forgiveness enjoy heaven with the children if they will but repent and accept God's mercy.

¹³⁶ GDC n. 43; DV n.8, CCC ns. 85-87.

judgements ‘in accordance with Revelation itself, which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with, that is, the Revelation which is written and orally handed down.’ (LG n. 25) If it is theologically established through a movement of the Holy Spirit that greater lights are being given in an area of faith and morals and that great mercy is being offered to mankind, it must come to the people via the discipline and guidance of the Church’s teaching Magisterium.

Christ sent His Apostles to teach the Gospel to all nations and He poured on them His Holy Spirit so that their words would reach the minds and hearts of all men. The strength of the mission given by the Lord, and the impulse of the Holy Spirit, the deep desire for the salvation of all nations, charges the Church with the duty of preaching Christ’s truth, and the whole truth. Revelation is entrusted to her, not only to transmit and to conserve it, but also to penetrate and to develop its contents, because the Holy Spirit leads her always into the whole truth. Thus the divine plan of salvation becomes more and more known in itself, and in its numberless effects.¹³³

Fr. Jobert shows that in our time one of these effects is the ‘glorious martyrdom of unborn children.’

The glory of this martyrdom sets in a greater light the Divine Will of universal salvation, the sanctifying power of Divine Love, through the baptism of Love flowing from the pierced Heart of Jesus, and the infinite Mercy of God which cannot be prevented by the children’s death, by the cruelty of men, or by the limits of the ordinary means of salvation. It shows Divine Justice operating for the sake of the innocent. It shows the power of Christ’s Blood which sanctifies the blood of the slain infants, and the power of the Divine Word speaking through their silent witness to Truth. It gives the Church the glory of an immense army of martyrs who are her children. It manifests the supreme importance of the grace, which is given through baptism and the other Sacraments.¹³⁴

Of all the positive arguments that show the validity of proclaiming the martyrdom of these children, the argument from Divine Love is supreme, because ‘God is Love’ (1Jn 4:16) and no one can separate these children from the Love of God (cf. Rom 8:31-39). The children do not have to do something to earn God’s love or to be saved by Christ, it is not our love for God but his saving love for us (cf. 1Jn 4:10). The nature of God’s love for these children is a sanctifying love. When this point is seriously considered it raises the whole issue of the children’s eternal fate to a higher level since they have been created by God who is Love, ‘to share, by knowledge and love, in God’s own life.’ (CCC n. 356) Divine Love, it seems, is the perfect answer to the children’s fate and shows how they are

¹³³ See Appendix I. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*. Paper titled; “Duty of the Church regarding aborted children.” Page 139.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

through the Church they become heralds of the Resurrection of Christ the Redeemer to all those who have harmed them.

Their recognition as martyrs by a possible future act of the College of bishops *sub et cum Petro*, ‘under and with Peter’, would testify in striking fashion to the universality of the Catholic Church’s philanthropic outreach in the perspective of salvation, and constitute a flaming witness to her stand in defence of the human dignity and rights of the conceptus, the conceived persons, everywhere (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2270).¹³¹

As the ‘sacrament of salvation’ (LG n. 48) the Church has a universal role to play in the positive argument for claiming these children for Christ. The Catholic Church has a motherly responsibility towards these children, to countless numbers of their parents, to governments and to medical personnel who have been involved in their deaths. The Church needs to reach these people more effectively than is presently happening; to call them to the truth, to the Church and her sacraments, in order to reconcile them to God and his laws, and to show all nations that their hope in God is not disappointed. (CCC n. 1261) Love is the driving force of the Church’s mission and it is God’s loving action in the Church that will help her to reach out to those who have killed the children, while at the same time showing to the world that God has not forgotten the cry of the needy (Ps 9:18). ‘It is from God’s Love for all men that the Church in every age receives both the obligation and the vigour of her missionary dynamism, ‘for the love of Christ urges us on’. (2 Cor 5:4; cf. AA 6; RM n. 11)

The Church is not only a worshipping community but also a prophetic witnessing community, called to reach out beyond itself to the world (Cf. LG n.10,12) and to bring God’s people into ‘communio’. The claiming will show that Christ has justified the children and that they are partakers in His glorious life. We see from the Church’s earliest teachings she has condemned abortion. From her ongoing magisterial documents and her latest condemnation of embryo experiments, she has consistently defended the right to life of every human person, from conception to natural death. The Church has authority and the prime responsibility to teach in matters of faith and morals because she has received this mandate from Christ and to make decisions regarding doctrinal matters and all elements of faith.¹³² It belongs to the Roman Pontiff and the Body of Bishops to make

¹³¹ *Abortion and Martyrdom*. ‘Setting the Question’, page 6.

¹³² C.f. VS. n.27: ‘The Church, in her life and teaching, is thus revealed as “the pillar and bulwark of the truth” (1Tim 3:15), including the truth regarding moral action. Indeed, “the Church has the right always and everywhere to proclaim moral principles, even in respect of the social order, and to make judgements about any human matter in so far as this is required by fundamental human rights or the salvation of souls. (Canon 747,2.)’

are “of Christ, in Christ, with Christ, after Christ, through Christ, for Christ.” And this is as it should be, for Christ is the “Archvirgin” and “the leader of the choir of virgins,” as Methodius calls him.¹²⁶ The Church Fathers show that virgin martyrs have a unique place in the Church. St. Athanasius says:

...[V]irginity, like martyrdom, appears from time to time as a kind of mark of the Church....’ Virginity like martyrdom, must have seemed to flow from the very nature of the Church, which was itself a virgin; sprung up from a sort of inner necessity within the Church, drawn on by the desire for Christ and the yearning to be one with God in the sharing of his incorruptible nature.¹²⁷

St. Cyprian says of virgins “You pass through the world without the contagion of the world. As long as you remain chaste and virgins you are equal to the angels of God.”¹²⁸ Though their passing through has been brief the aborted children have not been contaminated by the world. Gregory of Nyssa tells us; ‘Virginity is called uncorrupted, as such it is a participation in the [incorruptibility] of God himself.’¹²⁹ St. Augustine said: “Nothing guards the good of virginity except God himself who gave it, and God is love. Therefore the guardian of virginity is love, but the place of this guardian is humility. For there he lives, he who said that his Spirit rests on the lowly and the meek”.¹³⁰ The virgin Church seems the most appropriate place from which to show forth the value and beauty of the virginity and martyrdom of these children. It would help to reinstate the value of virginity for all states of life and not just in its physical form, but the deeper spiritual reality of belonging wholly to God.

The work of Christ and the Mission of the Church.

The positive effects of such a development and public proclamation however great can only be fully understood in the light of the Church’s mission and work; ‘The Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgement, to serve and not to be served.’ (GS n. 3) The claiming would show universally that the children have died for justice and truth and

¹²⁶ Ramsay, Boniface. *Beginning to read the Fathers*. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1993. Page 143.

¹²⁷ Ibid, page 147.

¹²⁸ Ibid, page 145.

¹²⁹ Ibid, page 141; ‘...For the Father has a son but has begotten Him in a virginal way, without passion; and the Holy Spirit is virginal as well. Virginity is therefore deifying. It enjoys communion with the whole celestial nature; since it is free from passion it is always present to the powers above.’

¹³⁰ Ibid, page 146.

*To make known to his people their salvation
Through forgiveness of all their sin,
The loving-kindness of the heart of our God,
Who visits us like the dawn from on high*

The Church acknowledges the effectiveness of the sign of martyrdom as a powerful witness to the truth as professed in the Church's faith. As a baptism of blood (CCC n. 1258) martyrdom witnesses to the source of all baptism and the source of the Sacramental life of the Church, Jesus Christ. It points to the ordinary means of salvation, the Sacraments, the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. In the liturgical action of proclaiming martyrs, the Church facilitates:

[A]n outstanding sign of the holiness of the Church', [to] fidelity to God's holy law, witnessed to by death. [It marks] a solemn proclamation and missionary commitment *usque ad sanguinem*, so that the splendour of moral truth may be undimmed in the behaviour and thinking of individuals and society. This witness makes an extraordinarily valuable contribution to warding off [...] a headlong plunge into the most dangerous crisis which can afflict man: the confusion between good and evil, which makes it impossible to build up and to preserve the moral order of individuals and communities.¹²²

On this point of witness, as the visible sacrament of Christ,¹²³ the Church benefits from bringing these new innocents visibly inside her fold, to give a positive witness to the world, 'a witness of hope'.¹²⁴ Not to do this in effect gives a negative witness i.e. acknowledging only the silence of death instead of proclaiming the Gospel of life in Christ. It gives the impression in the world that God is defeated in the holocaust of the killing of these innocents and that He has no answer to this problem.

Children killed before birth as virgin martyrs.

These children are virgins¹²⁵ and if acknowledged by the Church as martyrs, then virgin martyrs. Revelations 14:4 speaks of virgins who 'follow the Lamb wherever he goes'. Of virgins, St. Augustine said they

¹²² VS n. 105

¹²³ C.f. LG n. 1: 'Since the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race'.

¹²⁴ C.f. In a homily given on Trinity Sunday 6th June 2004 to the Bishops of Switzerland and prelates from other countries, to lay Catholics and members of other Christian denominations, Pope John Paul II said: "I ask the Lord to be a witness of hope among you, a witness of that hope that "does not disappoint" because it is founded on God's love, "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." (Rom 5:5) Today the world is especially in need of 'a supplement of hope' " L'Osservatore Romano, 9th June, 2004, pages 1&7.

¹²⁵ Cf. Being both male and female the aborted children are all understood as virgins, for "there is neither male nor female" (Gal 3:28), but Christ is all and in all" (Col 3:11).

today. Part of the text states: 'They could not speak, yet they confessed Christ. Helpless to enter the battle, they still carried off the palm of victory.'¹¹⁹ We see a similarity between the Holy Innocents and the children put to death before birth who also cannot speak, in fact they cannot even cry out like the Bethlehem children. We can ask how did the Holy Innocents silently confess Christ? – only in the circumstances of their deaths, as an ultimate witness to the transgression of objective truth and the commandment, 'Thou shall not kill'. The aborted children in their deaths give a similar witness but it may be argued that the adversary (Herod) killed the children at Bethlehem because he was directly seeking the Christ Child (thus a valid reason for their martyrdom). The reading continues:

Herod, why are you afraid when you hear that the King has been born? He does not usurp your place; he comes to conquer the devil. But you do not understand this and so you are in frenzy, mad with rage. And your determination to destroy the one infant whom you seek makes you inhumanly indifferent to the deaths of so many others. [.....] He, the source of grace, small yet immense, lies in a manger, and terrifies you on your throne, unknown to you, he works through you to complete His plans and to free souls from captivity to the devil. Already He has received the children of His enemies into the company of His adopted sons.¹²⁰

Being infants like the newborn Christ child Herod killed the children of Bethlehem for their subjective likeness to Christ. The aborted children are also infants but they have died for objective truth who is Christ, "If Christ is Truth, whoever is condemned for truth suffers for Christ, and a crown is due to him."¹²¹ Such is the case with the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist who died for a moral truth, the sixth Commandment upholding the sacredness of marriage. In terms of *criteria for martyrdom*, the children are seen to be closely related to St. John the Baptist. The Baptist was the forerunner of Christ, the children through the Church's action can be forerunners of the coming of Christ to their parents and others, as witnesses to the Redeemer, (through the offer of mercy and call to conversion). Zechariah's prophesy and prayer concerning John the Baptist (Lk 1: 68-79) seems equally relevant for the new holy innocents:

*As for you, little child,
You shall be called a prophet of God, the Most High.
You shall go ahead of the Lord
To prepare his ways before him,...*

¹¹⁹ Divine Office, English Edition. Page 65*.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ St Augustine (PLS2, 425). Referred to by Father Philippe Jobert in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 123.

another. St. Paul in Romans 13:8 says, 'He who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law.' In claiming these children, the Church proclaims to the world God's love for them, the Catholic Church as their Mother has not forgotten them and that the fullness of the law in their regard is fulfilled in the love Jesus Christ their Redeemer and Lord has for them.

Children killed before birth and righteousness.

We can see that in the context of righteousness ('Sedek': a right or claim as a means of salvation) that the children have a just claim, since their God given right to life has been taken from them.¹¹⁶ The children are righteous in their innocence. St. Paul says: 'This righteousness of man is not the work of man by achievement or merit; it is God alone who makes man righteous. No one can condemn the man whom God makes righteous' (Rm 8:34) and 'God works this righteousness through the death of Jesus. (1 Co 1:30) Scripture shows that The Lord 'will deliver the poor and the needy' (Ps 82:4). The action of the Church with regard to the children and those who are involved in their deaths will show that 'The Lord has delivered the poor and the needy.'

Children killed before birth and the first Holy Innocents.

There is evidently a strong link between the first Holy Innocents and the children killed before birth. This sets forth for the Church, *a positive precedent* for the process of this new martyrdom although some may object that the circumstances are different, but are they in essence? The Church 'instituted the Feast of the Holy Innocents at a date now unknown, not before the end of the fourth and not later than the end of the fifth century'¹¹⁷. It was recognised that these Holy Innocents had undergone a Baptism of blood.¹¹⁸ A sermon by St. Quodvultdeus from the Divine Office of Readings for the Feast day shows parallels between the historical situation of the children of Bethlehem and the aborted children

¹¹⁶ 'When one has a just claim or a right, in the case of these children the right to the life that God has given to the children, or when one is charged, the process by which his right is established or his innocence vindicated is not only justice under the law, it is also personal salvation.... It establishes a claim upon Yahweh to deliver one from evil.' See McKenzie L John. S.J. *Dictionary of the Bible*. London: Chapman, 1996. Under the heading 'Righteousness', pages 739-743)

¹¹⁷ *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*. London: Caxton Publishing Company, 1910. Volume 7 page 419.

¹¹⁸ In the wake of the liturgical reform initiated after Vatican II the liturgical colour of the vestments for the feast of the Holy Innocents was changed from purple to red so that it would be clearly understood as a feast for Martyrs.

The claiming and Sacred Tradition.

The content of the Charism relevant to this development and the theological work that has been drawn from it seems to be in accord with, and is confirmed by, various areas of sacred Tradition. We understand that Sacred Tradition which comes from the Apostles develops in the Church through the actions of the Holy Spirit so that the Church constantly moves forward toward ‘the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfilment in her.’ (DV n. 8) This action takes place in the whole body of the Church and is reflected in the Apostolic texts, the writings of the Fathers, the conciliar decrees and documents, Papal documents, the writings of the saints, sacred liturgy, in theological development and charisms. Any development that proclaims the word of God, manifests a deeper understanding of it, confirms the truth in areas of faith and refutes moral heresy is to be welcomed as a positive move forward.

Veritatis Splendor n. 28 states: ‘The Catholic Church ‘has faithfully preserved what the word of God teaches, not only about truths, which must be believed but also about moral action’ The Church has consistently condemned the immorality of abortion in every age of the Church, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law. (CCC n. 2271) The fact that millions of abortions have been performed since their legalization does not change the moral law that forbids them. The Second Vatican Council (GS n. 51) calls abortion “an unspeakable crime”.’ By proclaiming the aborted children as martyrs the Church publicly and universally refutes this moral evil and in a positive way proclaims the moral law found in the word of God.

Children killed before birth and the law.

The just requirement of the law is fulfilled in Jesus Christ who is the fullness of the law (Rom. 8.4). Their baptism, of blood, is a baptism of love¹¹⁴ and ‘love is the fulfilling of the law.’ (Rom 13:10).¹¹⁵ Love and truth, to which these children bear witness, are inseparably linked in the action of the Holy Spirit. Christ’s teaches us in the Gospel to love one

¹¹⁴ In a message from the inspiration dated 2nd September 1998, Jesus said that the aborted children’s baptism was a ‘baptism of love’ through of course a baptism of blood.

¹¹⁵ The inspiration reveals that the children have gone to the source of Baptism, which is the Christ’s Victory on the Cross. His suffering on the Cross is the highest expression of His Love for all mankind

“O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” (Rev 6:9,10) If considered martyrs the aborted children witness to the Word of God, Christ Himself, Divine Revelation transmitted in Scripture and Tradition.

St. John the Baptist was given a name even before he was conceived, as was Christ Himself. The theological and biblical sense of a name given by God denotes mission and identity as we see with Jesus¹¹⁰ and John the Baptist. In the charism of Divine Innocence the children are given the name “Mercy Reigns!”¹¹¹ In this name mercy is shown to have been given to the children via their baptism of blood and through their mission in the Church would show forth God’s mercy to those responsible for their deaths, and offer mercy to all peoples and nations of the world if they will but repent.

Scripture shows that innocent blood cries out for justice as did the blood of Abel.¹¹² “For he who avenges blood is mindful of them; he does not forget the cry of the afflicted” (Ps 9:12). It is a serious matter that the innocent blood of millions of children killed before birth has been spilt throughout the world. Only Christ’s perfect sacrifice can atone for this sin against the children, only His blood can cover this innocent blood. The perfect sacrifice of Christ is perpetuated for all time through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; it is a fundamental part of the Church’s role to offer up this sacrifice, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant for the remission of sins of all humanity. The children killed before birth are also the beneficiaries of Christ’s redeeming blood. ‘Aborted children are fully and actually united to the Paschal Mystery in the Mass as members of Christ Crucified and Risen, they offer it in Christ, and Christ offers it in them as a Sacrifice of thanksgiving.’¹¹³ It is only in and through the Catholic Church that a truly fitting praise and thanksgiving can be made for such mercy, justice and love.

¹¹⁰ The name ‘Jesus’ stems from ‘Yeshua’ and means “Yahweh is salvation”. Mc Kenzie S.J. *Dictionary of the Bible*. London: Chapman, 1965.

¹¹¹ Taken from a message of the inspiration dated 2nd October 1997.

¹¹² Genesis 4:10: "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand."

¹¹³ See Appendix I. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*; Paper titled; “The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the claiming of aborted children”, Page 129; “When the Mass is celebrated with reference to the claiming of the children, there is a development of doctrine, by making explicit what is implicitly contained in living Tradition, as it is done from Holy Scripture. Both Scripture and Tradition are the Word of God coming to us in two ways, in complementarity. The Holy Spirit gives assistance to the Church to express the Truth in the liturgy and give the impulse to develop the understanding of the Eucharistic mystery from the liturgical rites and texts, with regard to the children ‘s involvement in Christ’s Sacrifice.’

children's martyrdom as a witness to the truth of the Decalogue and other truths will touch human hearts world wide. Opposition from individuals, governments, drug companies, medical agencies or pro-abortion groups to the claiming will not be able to silence the truth that comes from God and is proclaimed by His Church from touching the hearts of millions of people of every nation.

In the Gospels, Jesus points to the elevated status of the innocence of children: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like one of these shall not enter it." (Mk 10:2-16). This passage contains possibly one of the strongest arguments from the Gospel in support of the claiming. It is this innocence and simplicity that Jesus asks all men and women to acquire. The disposition of a child seems to be a prerequisite of entry into the Kingdom of God. These innocent children already have this disposition to welcome the kingdom.

Jesus' teaching on the Beatitudes is relevant for the children. For example, 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God' (Mt 5:8). Having no actual sin the children are innocent. The stain of original sin is contracted and not committed¹⁰⁹ and in their martyrdom they are washed in the Blood of Jesus. 'Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of right theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Mt 5:10). These little ones are persecuted world wide in the cause of right, the right to life. It is through the gift of life that all other goods come to us from God. The beatitude of eternal life is a gratuitous gift of God and does not have to be earned by the children. The Beatitudes 'teach us the final end to which God calls everyone: the Kingdom, the vision of God, participation in the divine nature, eternal life, filiation, [and] rest in God.' (CCC n. 1726)

In being persecuted for the truth and God's word the children have an apocalyptic significance for these times; "When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; they cried out with a loud voice,

¹⁰⁹ C.f. CCC n. 404: Original Sin: 'It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human nature deprived of original holiness and justice. And that is why original sin is called "sin" only in an analogical sense: it is a sin "contracted" and not "committed" -- a state and not an act.'; CCC. n. 405: 'Although it is proper to each individual, (Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1513) original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death,... Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back toward God'

The claiming and Sacred Scripture.

The Church ‘constantly finds her nourishment and her strength’ (CCC n. 104) in Sacred Scripture. The claiming has positive support in Sacred Scripture and Tradition. Throughout the Old and New Testaments books we find clear evidence to show that God’s relationship with man is one of love. God takes care of all his children sinner and the innocent alike. The sacredness of life is shown to have its beginning and end in God, in his creative activity: "For God made man in his own image." (Gen 9:6); “thou didst knit me together in my mother’s womb.’(Ps 139:13) Life which was always in God and which is the "light of men" (Jn 1:4) consists in being begotten of God and sharing in the fullness of his love. We understand that man is precious in God’s sight, his Creator does not forget him; “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have graven you on the palms of my hands...”(Is 49:15). God does not abandon his people but reminds them that they belong to him. “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (Jer 32:33) These passages assure us that God has not forgotten these children and is actively seeking to convert the perpetrators, so that in both the children and those who have killed them; God’s love and mercy and justice are shown forth.

In the New Testament Christ confirms this teaching and reveals an even deeper understanding of the significance of the commandments and the new commandment to love one another. Christ’s own supreme saving act of love unfolds in the paschal mystery. Jesus speaks in the Gospels of the rewards to those who keep the commandments and the consequences for those who break them (Mt 5:19). He also makes a conditional promise when he said: “If you wish to enter into life keep the commandments” (Mt 19:17). St. John says, “Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him”. (John 3:18-24) If their innocent deaths are recognised as martyrdom and the children are claimed for Christ and His Church because they have been killed in opposition to a number of the Commandments, this act will proclaim that both natural and divine law have been broken, in the face of all those who denied that any wrong doing has taken place. In this way the truth replaces false doctrine and false world views.

In the Catholic tradition the Decalogue is seen as ‘written on the heart, ‘From the beginning, God has implanted in the heart of man the precepts of the natural law. ...This was the Decalogue.’¹⁰⁸ The proclamation of the

¹⁰⁸ Cf. CCC n. 2070.

which every person is freely called by the Son, by the power of the Sanctifying Spirit.

Children killed before birth and Christ's Prophet, Priestly and Kingly role.

Being the fullness of Revelation and mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ has won the redemption of all God's People and therefore all people, including the children killed before birth, find their meaning in Christ. There can be nothing wanting in Christ's perfect Sacrifice on the Cross with regard to the salvation of these children¹⁰⁵ and He is 'the final event towards which all the events of salvation history converge.'¹⁰⁶ Christ's mission in the world continues as a joint mission with the Holy Spirit. (C.f. CCC. ns. 689, 690, 727) If claimed, the children are shown to be fully included in Christ's saving victory, and share in Christ's Prophet, Priestly and Kingly roles in the Church and in the world.

As Prophet, Jesus communicates the Good News of salvation to the world. By the children sharing in this prophetic role they witness to truth and righteousness, to the power of Christ's Victory over all sin and death. As Priest, Christ mediates between God and man. He accepted suffering and death, and offered himself on the Cross as a sacrifice for sinners. As God He gives gifts to men (cf. Eph 4:8) and the grace of sanctification through His Spirit (cf. 1Cor 12:11). Through the Mass He continues to offer His perfect sacrifice to the Father in the Church through His priests, to draw down God's mercy on sinners. Sharing in this priestly office, the children's suffering helps to 'make up what is lacking in the body of Christ' (Col 1:24) and are enfolded in Christ's perfect sacrifice (cf. 2 Cor 1:5).¹⁰⁷ The children share in the priestly mediation for all sinners and their innocent suffering united to Christ makes reparation especially for those responsible for their deaths. As King, Christ establishes his kingdom and builds it up through the Church. Freed from original sin and sanctified by God's Love through the Blood of Jesus, the children share in this royal power and with, in and through Christ help to build up His kingdom.

¹⁰⁵ In a message dated 11th June 1998(ii) taken from the inspiration Jesus asks the question, "Is there something wanting in my perfect Sacrifice on the Cross?"

¹⁰⁶ Congregation for the Clergy. *General Directory for Catechesis*, (hereafter GDC). CTS Publications, London, 1997. n. 40.

¹⁰⁷ See *Lumen Gentium*, n. 10: Speaking of 'The People of God' it states: 'Therefore all the disciples of Christ, persevering in prayer and praising God, should present themselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.' Through the claiming the children are seen to fulfil this requirement.

Church's ministers and indeed all the faithful to "put out into the deep" for a great catch of souls. (Lk 5:4)¹⁰¹.

Showing his personal concern regarding the theological need for a deeper understanding of the eternal fate of 'Children who die without Baptism', Pope John Paul II on the 7th October 2004 asked the International Theological Commission to look into the, 'Nagging Question,'¹⁰² of children who die without Baptism. When the Pope received the participants in the plenary assembly of the International Theological Commission, whose purpose is to examine important doctrinal questions, he said the question of the eternal fate of children who die before Baptism is not simply an isolated theological problem, "Many other fundamental topics are closely related to it: the universal salvific will of God; the unique and universal mediation of Jesus Christ; the role of the Church, universal sacrament of salvation; the theology of the sacraments; the meaning of the doctrine on original sin."¹⁰³ Speaking to the consulters the Holy Father goes on to say; "It corresponds to you to scrutinize the nexus among all these mysteries to offer a theological synthesis that might serve as an aid for a more consistent and enlightened pastoral practice".¹⁰⁴

We understand that through the Church God's plan of salvation is gradually realized as all creation is finally reconciled to Him. It is part of the final period of world history, which begins with the birth of Christ, includes the pilgrim journey of the Church, and will be consummated with the Second Coming of Christ. The Church by claiming these children for Christ and his Church, proclaims to the world and particularly to their parents that 'Nothing is definitively lost.' (EV n. 99) The parents are given the hope of being united with their child in the communion of Saints through the Church here in the world and at last in heaven. The life, which the Son of God came to give to human beings, cannot be reduced to a mere existence in time. "Man is called to a fullness of life which far exceeds the dimensions of his earthly existence, because it consists in sharing the very life of God." (EV n. 2) The children's short lives are enlightened by the promise of eternal life and renewed by the gift of divine life, which reaches its full realization in eternity, (cf. Jn 3:15; 6:4) that "new and eternal life" which consists in communion with the Father, to

¹⁰¹ John Paul II. Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunt*. (At the beginning of the New Millennium). CTS Publications, London, 2001, n.1.

¹⁰² John Paul II's request to the International Theological Commission an institution of the Holy See headed by the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to look into the Matter of Children who Die Without Baptism: A Nagging Question. 7th Oct. 2004, Reported by: Zenit News Services The World Seen from Rome, Date:7th Oct 2004 (Code: ZEO4100703) (Zenit.org)

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

safely in their mother's womb. Christ was unjustly condemned to death through false witnesses; the children are also condemned to death on the word of falsehoods put forward to justify their deaths, such as the denial of their personhood. Christ was innocently put to death because the commandment 'Thou shall not kill' was broken, the children also die innocently because this commandment is broken. The children however are not confined to a subjective likeness of Christ, in their deaths they silently witness to the truth of life, to Christ who is 'the Way the Truth and the Life (Jn 14:6).

Children killed before birth and the Holy Spirit.

In St. John's Gospel we are told 'For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will' (Jn 5:21). Through the co-operation of the Mother Church it can be shown that Christ gives these children life in his Church. The Holy Spirit is the Lord the Giver of Life, the Sanctifier and Advocate who proceeds from the Father and Son.¹⁰⁰ The gifts of the Spirit build up the Church in a good and orderly way, contributing to the harmony and order of the body of Christ, but we need to be careful not to stifle the workings of the Spirit. (Thess. 5:19). The Spirit is supremely free, and blows where He wills (Jn 1:8). He is the children's Sanctifier and Advocate. The Spirit in the Church bears witness to the risen Christ, and he does this mainly through the human witness of members of the community he creates and fills. The claiming would be a public and universal statement saying that the Spirit of the Father and the Son has come to these children, whom God has created. He has chosen them, the weakest of the weak, to bear witness universally in and through the Church to the risen Christ and to his power in human weakness (C.f. 1Cor 1:27).

The Church and God's Plan of Salvation.

In the vision of Pope John XXIII, Vatican II strove to show a more open and positive understanding of God's universal salvific will; to reach out to all peoples everywhere with the Gospel message 'so that by hearing the message of salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope and by hoping it may love.' (DV; Prologue) Pope John Paul II's pontificate continued this missionary zeal and he has encouraged the

¹⁰⁰ The Nicene Creed.

divine likeness in these children? Surely they are not excluded from God's love and the action of the Holy Spirit. By the Church raising these children to the Altar, glory is given to the Holy Trinity; God's Divine Mercy, Love and Justice are acknowledged and glorified, and the power of Christ's Victory on the Cross is universally proclaimed. It shows that Christ 'has put all things under his feet' (Heb 2:8). It is the Father's will that all mankind become members of Christ and share in his glory by being 'conformed by adoptive filiation to His image as God's Son in glory.'⁹⁹ The claiming would show forth to the whole world the glory of the children in heaven and proclaims their mission through Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Church, according to the Father's Will that all men might be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Through the action of the Church she shows the glory and honour of Christ's Victory on the Cross over all sin and death. 'He who honours the Son honours the one who sent him,' God the Father. (Jn 5:23). The Church shows how Christ's definitive victory does not fall short of millions of little children by proclaiming Christ's saving victory in them. She facilitates the children's martyr witness throughout the universal Church and the whole world. In this way offering a share in that same victory to those who have killed the children, if they repent and believe in the Gospel, are reconciled to God's law the teachings of the Church .

Children killed before birth and Christ's mission.

Revelation reveals that all persons have been predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son of God (C.f. Rom 8:29). As I said above it was the Father's Will that Jesus Christ came so that all men might be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (C.f. 1Tim 2:4). In the Gospels Jesus Himself told us to take up our cross daily and follow him (C.f. Mk 10:21), we are to be so conformed to Christ that He lives in us and we live in him (C.f. Jn 15:4). St. Paul also tells us that if we have died with [Christ] we shall also live with him (Rom 6:8). We can see from the material supporting this development that the children killed before birth are in many ways conformed to Christ and especially so in their deaths.

Like Christ the children have committed no actual sin but are innocent victims of other people's sins. Christ 'came to his own, but his own received him not' (Jn 1:11); the children came to their own parents and nations and they did not receive them or welcome them. Jesus had no where to lay his head (Mt 8:20); the children cannot even lay their heads

⁹⁹ See Appendix I. Jobert, Philippe Fr. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*. Paper titled 'Holy Innocents in our times', page 113.

Chapter 4. The Positive Case.

Development of doctrine in the Church.

In the history of the Church we see that when she was challenged in areas of faith and morals or when theological disputes came about, the Church received the grace to resolve heresies and disputes by developing doctrine and defining dogmas and to make authoritative pronouncements. We can see over the course of centuries how different areas of doctrine concerning the Creed, sacramental theology, moral theology, martyrdom etc. have developed to address particular circumstances and moments in the history of the Church. For example, we see in the process of the canonisation of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, that many believed he would come under the category of Confessor but Pope John Paul II pronounced him a ‘Martyr of Charity’. This was a development of the definition of martyrdom.

Development of doctrine in the Church is a proof that the Holy Spirit is working to deepen Her understanding of Divine Revelation.⁹⁷ Cardinal Newman tells us that development is to be welcomed as something positive which strengthens our faith. He says it ‘illustrates, not obscures, corroborates, not corrects, the body of thought from which it proceeds’⁹⁸.

The claiming and the Holy Trinity.

In the Holy Trinity the Son is the Glory of the Father, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds from both, glorifies the Father and the Son. All creation glorifies God through the Son by acknowledging His transcendent Goodness. We glorify God most when we acknowledge and praise Him for the redemptive mission of the Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit helps us to partake in Christ’s Priestly offering to His Father. The Spirit comes unceasingly into the world (CCC n. 732) to restore in us the divine likeness. Can we say categorically that the Holy Spirit does not restore the

⁹⁷ St. Vincent of Lerins sets out the criteria for development of Christian doctrine in the second Reading of the Divine Office of Readings, Week 27 of the year. ‘Is there to be no development of doctrine in Christ’s Church? Certainly there should be great development. Who would be so grudging towards his fellow-men and so hostile to God as to prevent it?’ ...But care should be taken to ensure that it really is development of the faith and not alteration. Development implies that each point of doctrine is expanded within itself, while alteration suggests that a thing has been changed from what it was into something different. It is desirable then that development should take place, and that there should be a great and vigorous growth in the understanding, knowledge and wisdom of every individual as well as of all the people, on the part of each member as well as the whole Church, gradually over the generations and ages’

⁹⁸ *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, page 200.

be saved and brought into eternal happiness....”⁹⁴ The same document repeatedly refers to the *sensus fidelium* – the sense of the faithful – to illustrate how Christians increasingly reject the idea that the vision of God would be denied to innocent babies. “An important reason for the failure of attempts to get Vatican II to teach that unbaptised infants are definitely deprived of the vision of God”⁹⁵

In this section we have looked at various objections which may be raised against this development and put forward answers to them. This already begins to build a positive case for the Catholic Church to claim the children put to death before birth and to raise them to the Altar as companion martyrs of the first Holy Innocents. It was Cardinal John Henry Newman who pointed out the importance of the ‘antecedent argument’ in the process of the development of doctrine⁹⁶ and we can see how each of these doctrinal points like strands of a rope helps to build a case for the claiming. We will now look in more detail at the positive case in favour of claiming the children, and at other implications and effects that will lead us on to the missionary and catechetical role of the Church in relation to claiming these children as her own.

⁹⁴International Theological Commission *The Hope of Salvation*

⁹⁵ *ibid*

⁹⁶ Newman, John Henry. *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. USA: Notre Dame Books, 1989. Chapter 2, page 55 ff.

denied the beatific vision for all eternity. This does not seem to be compatible with God's justice, mercy and love.

When the children die and come before God for their particular judgement, they have no actual sin to expiate so Purgatory is not applicable for them. They have not committed any sin and do not reject God, so they cannot be sent to Hell. If we accept that limbo would not be a just solution the Church teaches definitively only one other destination, heaven.

The Limbo theory is theologically inadequate to answer the fate of unbaptised infants within the context of the Father's saving Will: 'The theory of limbo 'limps' because it relies upon divine Justice only, and not upon Justice and Mercy together. God is at the same time Justice and Mercy: so there is never divine Justice without Mercy' (Ps 88:15)⁹⁰ Fr. Jobert believes that for children who are killed in abortion, there is a previous action of Christ's Mercy for them: 'He united them to His own Martyrdom, as witnesses for the Gospel of Life. They are martyrs in Him and are consequently glorified in Him.'⁹¹ 'The children killed before birth are martyrs in Christ, because Christ exercises his own martyrdom in them, out of his Mercy and Justice, all objections are destroyed; because they are formulated as though Christ is not living any more, as through his sacrifice is not eternalised by his Divine Act of Being and present to the children, as though his Mercy forgets these children and is not powerful enough to save them.'⁹²

Father Jobert makes an important point regarding the Covenant and Limbo: 'God is the Prime Lover in the Covenant, the first effect of the Covenant is prevenient grace: In our first parents, [i]n the Immaculate Conception [and] [i]n the martyrdom of unborn children. 'The theory of limbo forgets and neglects the Covenant. Through abortion the devil tries to undermine the Covenant.'⁹³

The International Theological Commission called by Pope John Paul II in 2005 published a document in 2007 regarding Infants who die before baptism said, "The conclusion of this study is that there are theological and liturgical reasons to hope that infants who die without baptism may

⁹⁰ See Fr Jobert, Appendix I. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*. Paper titled: "Limbo, No", page 142.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid. Paper titled, "Objections to the claiming of children killed before birth as martyrs", page 147.

⁹³ Ibid. Paper titled, "Covenant", page 118.

certain urgency which would advocate their cause at this moment in history even before that of other truly innocent victims.’⁸⁶

Eleventh Objection.

The children go to Limbo therefore there is no need for the Church to claim them, they enjoy a natural happiness.

Although it was never defined as a dogma of faith the existence of limbo was posed as a possible answer by some theologians wrestling with the question of children who die without Baptism.⁸⁷ The fate of children who die without baptism has been looked at within the Church by many theologians over the centuries, some of whom put forward the theory of ‘Limbo of the infants.’ ‘Limbo was suggested as an intermediary place between heaven and hell, which spared the innocent who died without baptism from the punishments of hell.’⁸⁸ The theory states that the children who die without baptism do not enjoy the beatific vision of God but only a natural happiness.

Christ came to bring us supernatural happiness and show us the way to the Father. ‘The Church [has] treated the doctrine of limbo and the denial of limbo simply as “opinions” of theologians; she has been content with her decision to the present day’⁸⁹, but there is now a rethink. Also, it seems significant that the New Catechism of the Catholic Church does not mention the existence of Limbo. Instead it tells us that, ‘Jesus’ tenderness toward children which caused him to say: ‘Let the little children come to me, do not hinder them’, allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism.’ (CCC n. 1261).

If we are to accept the theory of Limbo, this invariably means, that those who have killed the children, if they repented and were reconciled to God and his Church, would have the opportunity to reach heaven and enjoy the Beatific Vision of God, while their victims, the innocent children, are

⁸⁶ Schumacher Michele M., “The martyr status of the aborted child: a share in Christ’s witness to the Father of mercies.” Included in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 63.

⁸⁷ [T]heologians have established this notion, not from Revelation, but from reasoning; which was based on the necessity of baptism, and on the freedom of assent to faith, exclusively. Having no use of freewill, no possibility of being baptised, the children who die in the womb of their mother cannot receive grace and go to heaven. Having not committed any actual sin and being deprived of grace only by original sin, they are not condemned to hell. Limbo is neither heaven nor hell; only a negative concept, not a reality. See Fr Jobert, Appendix I. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*. Paper titled: “Objections to the claiming of children killed before birth as martyrs”, page 147.

⁸⁸ John Paul II’s request to Catholic theologians to study the question of the fate of children who die without baptism. Zenit News Agency – The World Seen From Rome, Code: ZE4100703. Oct 7th 2004.

⁸⁹ Dyer, J. George. ‘*Limbo, unsettled Question.*’ USA: Sheed and Ward, Inc, 1964, page 89.

Baptism. (CCC n. 1261) Perhaps these words will provide some consolation to those parents who have lost children through miscarriage who also need pastoral care from the Church. The Charism of Divine Innocence draws the distinction between the children put to death before birth who are called ‘virgin martyrs’ and to children who die naturally as ‘virgin souls,’

Tenth Objection.

‘What about other innocent children who have been killed after birth such as street children in South America who have been murdered as a means of dealing with a social problem, can one differentiate?’

A court deals with each case individually, the Church likewise does not mix up causes going forward for beatification, each having their own individual context and circumstances. Each case needs to be looked at on its own merits. Regarding children killed before birth, there are certainties in their regard, they cannot receive sacramental baptism, they are innocent of actual sin but have the stain of original sin. This cannot be said with certainty of all children who have been killed after birth who have a great range of ages. The freewill of the children killed before birth is only potential and having no merit of their own; in their helplessness they are utterly dependent on Christ’s merits, on His saving Blood to cleanse them from original sin and to sanctify them by His Spirit. With other cases differing circumstances have to be considered, such as determining the age of reason, innocence and the subjective cause of death.⁸⁵ It may be so that many of these children are candidates for beatification but this is for the Church to decide separately from this cause.

On this issue and included in her paper in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, Michele M. Schumacher states:

[T]he Church’s intervention would, it must be admitted open the same possibility to other truly innocent victims of violent crimes – children who have not reached the age of reason and the mentally handicapped, for instance – victims whose blood, when offered by the Church with that of Christ, might truly ‘speak more graciously than the blood of Abel’ (cf. Heb. 12:24) to convict the consciences of those responsible for the violent taking of their lives thereby allowing for the penetration of the graces of conversion for all those involved in the horrendous crime of abortion. On the other hand, given the magnitude of the crime of abortion and the obscuring of public’ conscience in its regard, there is, it seems to me, a

⁸⁵ ‘Those who bring to an end the lives of children before their births voluntary transgress this divine law so aborted children are made into victims in all objectivity,’ Fr Jobert, *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 123.

dissipates the Aristotolean doubt: **the Prime Mover can produce a spiritual soul at the moment of conception, and the Prime Lover will produce it as the proper effect of His Love: the communication of His likeness.**⁸⁴ [our emphasis]

If the Magisterium were to claim these children killed before birth, the wording of such a pronouncement would be important and overcome the above objection. It would have to identify as martyrs all those created by God, in His image and likeness and killed before birth. If this was done it would not be necessary to define the exact moment of each individual conception. It must also be remembered that these children are raised to the altar as a body such as the Holy Innocents and the First Martyrs of the See of Rome where particular individuals were not known but their witness was still acknowledged.

Ninth Objection.

What of children who die naturally such as children who die through miscarriages?

In this study we are not dealing here with all children who have died before baptism. We are dealing specifically with a particular group of children deliberately put to death before birth. If the martyrdom of these children is accepted, as an authentic witnesses to the truth and the dignity of human life, a doctrinal way is then established to show that they enjoy the fruits of salvation through a ‘baptism of love’ and blood. It is the purpose of this work to demonstrate that these children can be considered martyrs and from this the pastoral issue of reaching those who have been responsible for the children’s deaths. This development however will help to shed light on the theological question of miscarried children. While it is an important question for those who have been affected by miscarriage, it does not present the same pastoral urgency as those who have been involved the killing of children for many more children are in danger of being put to death and those involved in wilfully putting the children to death are in grave sin and are in need of being reconciled to God and the truth taught by the Church.

Miscarried children have not died at the hands of others contrary to God’s law. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: ‘Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus’ tenderness toward children which caused him to say: ‘Let the children come to me, do not hinder them’ (Mk 10:14; cf. 1 Tim 2:4), allows us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without

⁸⁴ See Appendix I. Jobert, Philippe Fr. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*. Paper titled: ‘The Philosophy of Divine Love.’ Page 157.

speaks of two aspects; ‘matter’ and ‘form’, the latter being the animating principle. Drawing upon this philosophy the Catechism in paragraph n. 365 states: ‘The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the ‘form’ of the body i.e. it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living human body: spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their unions forms a single nature.’

St. Thomas Aquinas understood that since matter and form are so complementary, it is not possible for the soul to be present in matter that was insufficiently organised i.e. in matter that is not already human. For this reason based on the scientific knowledge of his day, St. Thomas understood ensoulment to take place some time after conception. However, with the contribution of modern science and the discovery of the human genetic code, we know now that there is a perfect organisation of the zygote at the moment of conception and so St. Thomas who followed Aristotelian philosophy would also have maintained this view.

The Church may need to make a more definite pronouncement regarding the soul being present at conception. God’s relationship with the human person is a person to person relationship of love, a relationship with the whole person in a unity of body and soul.⁸³ It is the whole person, body and soul who is saved by Christ, according to the Will of the Father in the Unity of the Holy Spirit. For this Trinitarian relationship of love with the human person made in God’s image, the soul must be present at conception? In his *Theological Clarifications* Father Jobert sheds some light on this issue:

Modern science has shown that from the first moment of conception, from the union of both male and female elements, the program of development of the organs, and the beginnings of these organs are present. Thus, at the same moment the perfection of the creating Cause, Divine Love, and the complete dispositions of the subject, shows that the spiritual soul is present as a formal cause of the body from the first moment of conception. The purpose of the efficient Cause, Divine Love, is the communication of its image, as spiritual, at the same level as this image is in the procreating cause of the person.....

The doubt of Aristotle in this matter comes from his theory of the form springing from the potentiality of the matter. In this way, it is not possible to reach in generation a form, which transcends the potentiality of the matter, i.e. a spiritual soul, with immaterial potentiality of intellectual and voluntary operations. St. Thomas Aquinas follows [Aristotle] but the philosophical demonstration of a First Cause, a Prime Mover who is a Prime Lover

⁸³ GS n. 14: ‘Man though made of body and soul, is a unity’: Also Pope John Paul II: ‘Man is ‘an incarnate spirit... a soul which expresses itself in a body and a body informed by an immortal spirit’ a ‘unified totality’; Encyclical Letter, *Familiaris Consortio* n. 11.

his mother's womb. (Jer 1:4-5) St. John the Baptist leapt for joy in the womb of his mother when she was filled with the Holy Spirit. (Cf. Luke 1:39-45; V.S. 61) Joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit and the action of the child proves the cause of the joy, God's sanctifying Spirit. St. Paul tells us that even in his mother's womb he was given his mission (Gal 1:15) which was a grace. Scripture also reveals that God has no favourites (Rom 2:11) so there is no reason why these children can not receive grace in the womb. It may be asked, is it sufficient grace? St. Paul was told by the Lord "My grace is sufficient for you." (2 Cor 12:9). God does not give insufficient grace for salvation. It is also Church teaching for *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22 states:

'Since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partakers, in a way known to God, of the Paschal mystery.'

It seems that the Church is being shown how these children are partakers in that mystery.

Eight Objection.

'We do not know when the soul is present therefore the Church cannot claim all children killed before birth'.

The question of ensoulment is important because there are those who feel that if the soul is not present at conception it is acceptable to experiment on living human beings in the early stages of their development, although we see that children are killed at every stage of development.⁸⁰ There are many who argue that the child in the womb is not a person but a cluster of cell tissue and therefore children before birth can be killed or used for scientific experiments, they deny the presence of the spiritual soul of the child.

The Church teaches that human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception, that is from the first moment of his or her existence, and to be recognized as having the rights of a person, among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.⁸¹ From the early centuries the Church has upheld the unity of man's body and soul stating that 'it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul'. (CCC n. 364) Because of this unity the soul does not pre-exist the body⁸² and this is also true for the converse. Referring to living things with the power to grow and develop Aristotle

⁸⁰ See Appendix III, page 219.

⁸¹ CCC. n. 2270; Cf. CDF, *Donum vitae* I, 1.

⁸² Pre-existentism was rejected by a Synod at Constantinople (543) against the Origenists, and by a Synod at Braga (561) against the Priscillianists. Denz. 203,236.

Sixth Objection.

'You are asking the Church to claim children who would be killed in the future.'

Scripture effectively answers this objection in Revelation 6:9-11:

*'When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; they cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?" Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren should be complete, **who were to be killed as they themselves had been.**' [our emphasis.]*

This passage speaks of those who have been slain for the word of God and of their witness to the word. It also speaks of those who would in the future be killed as they themselves had been. These children who can be said to wear the white robe of innocence have been washed in the blood of the Lamb and they witness to the word of God that has been broken in their regard.

When the children's martyrdom is publicly proclaimed those who kill these children will come to realise that the children are martyred because of disobedience to the divine and natural law. It will have the effect of discouraging further abortions because all will know without doubt that those who kill the unborn child create a martyr and that their actions (for which they are answerable before God) are the cause of this martyrdom.

These children as a category of martyr do not require the same canonical process for there is no life to investigate so to speak, only the theological and doctrinal criteria for them to be numbered among the white robed army. If we have ascertained the objective criteria for these children as a body to be considered within the embrace of salvation so as to be claimed for Christ and His Church as martyrs to the truth, what obstacle is there for future children in the same category to be considered as such?

Seventh Objection.

'You cannot prove a child in the womb receives grace.'

The creation of these children is a grace from God. God does not create the child and then abandon it.⁷⁹ There is evidence in Scripture that grace can reach the child in the womb. The Prophet Jeremiah was consecrated in

⁷⁹ The heresy of Deism.

Fifth Objection.

There are too many children to claim. The Church could instead claim one child of whom it could be proved that it died in “odium fidei” to represent all the other children killed before birth. [An example of this would be that the baby was killed because it was a Catholic.]

All humanity was not too many for Christ to die for and save so why would the children be too many for the Church to claim if Christ has justified them? If one child can be claimed surely all can be claimed. Claiming all the children preserves privacy, no individual mother, child, or family need be made known. Without excluding any children it also does not exclude anyone who has been involved in the deaths of these children. The claiming would therefore touch all those involved in this corporate sin with the light of truth because the Commandments are written upon the heart. The Church by claiming these children and raising them to the Altar, universally proclaims the truth that Jesus is Saviour of all mankind and the Church is the one place where the saving Sacraments are available for those involved in abortion and experiments on children can be completely reconciled

Jesus in the Gospel rebuked those who would stop little children coming to Him. “Suffer the little children to come unto me, forbid them not for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Mat 18:2). Jesus did not say “Suffer one child to come to me to represent all other children.” The one child approach is a subjective approach; it is on a lower theological level which fails to give the glory to God.

Martyrdom is exclusively a gratuitous gift of Christ, the giving of Himself as the King of martyrs, to continue His witness to divine Truth, in and through all unborn children. There is no place for an exception, either on the part of Christ, or on the part of the children, who themselves are conformed to His likeness in death and bear witness to the truth about life. This martyrdom is universal in itself, for it is a participation of all children in Christ’s martyrdom. This universality of salvation and martyrdom in the case of unborn children is so essential, that to look for an individual case of martyrdom in one child who is killed in abortion “*in odium fidei*”, would completely miss the point. In such a singular case, the universal salvific Will of God and Christ’s martyrdom are not taken into account. The charism of martyrdom is reduced to the human level and to the exceptional human conditions of the violent death of one person only: and the glory of martyrdom would be received by this person, not by God’s Mercy and Christ Crucified alone.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Fr. Philippe Jobert O.S.B. ‘Post scriptum; Can the Magisterium of the Church acknowledge children killed in abortion as companions of the Holy Innocents and therefore as martyrs?’ Paper included in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 134.

died to sin still live in it?’ This counter argument is again repeated in Romans 6:15-2.⁷⁶

To kill an innocent child so as to make heaven available to that child or to save it from coming into this world where it might suffer, is an evil act regardless of any good motive. Many reasons are given in society for the killing of the children and most are presented as having good motives. This does not change the fact that it is an intrinsically evil act to kill the innocent. To say that claiming the children will encourage abortions seems unreasonable when one sees the sheer scale of abortions and methods of murdering the children it seem little encouragement seems to be needed.

In *Veritatis Splendor* n.80, Pope John Paul II states:

Reason attests that there are objects of the human act which are by their nature “incapable of being ordered” to God, because they radically contradict the good of the person made in his image. These are the acts which, in the Church’s moral tradition, have been termed “intrinsically evil” (*intrinsece malum*): they are always and per se, on account of their very object, and quite apart from the ulterior intentions of the one acting and the circumstances [. . .] seriously wrong...⁷⁷

The Second Vatican Council confirming the respect due to the human person, gives explicit examples of such acts: “Whatever is hostile to life itself, such as any kind of homicide, genocide, abortion, euthanasia and voluntary suicide;...” (GS n. 27)

⁷⁶ Hebrews 10:26 is even more explicit in condemning this error: ‘For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgement, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries.’

⁷⁷ Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (2 Dec. 1984), 17: AAS 77 (1985), 221; cf. Paul VI, Address to the Members of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, (September 1967): AAS 59 (1967), 962: “Far be it from Christians to be led to embrace another opinion, as if the Council taught that nowadays some things are permitted which the Church had previously declared intrinsically evil. Who does not see in this the rise of a depraved moral relativism one that clearly endangers the Church’s entire doctrinal heritage?”

[N]ot yet having the use of their freewill, they are under God's direct motion in their natural will for happiness. Thus Christ takes them into His Crucifixion when they are killed. Living in them through grace, He offers them in His own offering to the Father and they share in His Sacrifice for all sinners. They are perfect instruments of Christ's charity: this complete instrumentality is completely identified with Christ's martyrdom and witness: this is the highest level of martyrdom because it is a glory only for Christ through them [the children] and with them as human persons.⁷⁵

Fourth Objection.

By claiming these children, it could encourage abortions if people thought that their child would become a saint. It may be argued that it would be better to kill the child rather than bring it into the world where it might suffer such things as poverty and sickness.

Catholic moral theology teaches that it is never lawful, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil that good may come of it. St. Paul clearly rejects this way of thinking and from his Letters it seems he had to refute this type of argument a number of times. In Romans 3:5-8 we read: 'But if our wickedness serves to show the justice of God, what shall we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) By no means! For then how could God judge the world? But if through my falsehood God's truthfulness abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? And why not do evil that good may come? - as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.' Also in Romans 6:1-4 we read: 'What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who

⁷⁵ See Appendix I, *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*. Paper titled "Certainties regarding the fate of children killed in the womb." Page 135.

‘This objectively confers on their death the formal notion (*ratio formalis*) of martyrdom.’⁷² The Holy Innocents were killed by Herod, who wanted to kill Christ: formally Christ was martyred in each of them. They were witnesses to Christ as Messiah by their blood, without any possibility of willing it. The new holy innocents ie. all children killed before birth, are martyr victims in the similar way.

Third Objection.

The children could exercise their free will against God and reject Him.

The children are too young to have the use of their free will, since they have no way of exercising it, it is potential. They have not the use of this freewill anymore than they have the use of their lungs. In any case the Church teaches that children below the age of reason are not considered responsible. Christ said that he who is not against him is with him. (Mk 9:40) When a child is brought to the fount for Baptism in the ordinary way, there is no suggestion, that the child might be harbouring resistance toward Christ in its will and rejecting the sacrament. All children have been created by a loving God and are orientated to the good, their supreme good is God. God does not create evil or human persons with any evil intent; ‘Since God is perfectly good, He cannot be the direct cause of any evil.’⁷³ St. Thomas Aquinas in his Summa said that ‘Children before the use of reason do not have an inordinate act of the will, neither will they have one after death’⁷⁴

The very fact that the children cannot exercise their will shows that their martyrdom is unique and this is because

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Stravinskis Peter M.J, (ed). *Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Encyclopaedia*. Huntington, Indiana, USA: Our Sunday Visitor Inc. 1991. Article titled ‘Evil’, pages 377-378.

⁷⁴ Aquinas, De Malo, q. 5 art. 3 corp.

At a more fundamental level the active participation of the martyr is a grace from God acting in the martyr to conform them to Christ the proto martyr. It is not only the martyr's choice for Christ but Christ's choice of the martyr through His grace to witness to a particular truth. This is shown in Jesus' words in John Gospel, "You did not choose me I chose you." (John 15:16) We know that God's power is shown forth in human weakness. He chooses the weak and makes them strong in bearing witness to Him. (cf. 1Cor 1:27,28). These children could be considered the weakest members of society. Pope John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* n. 58 says: 'No one more absolutely innocent could be imagined. [...] He or she is weak, defenceless, even to the point of lacking that minimal form of defence consisting in the poignant power of a newborn baby's cries and tears.'

In death these children are conformed to the death of Christ as witnesses to divine truth. Christ indeed gives testimony in them and dies in them. 'By their martyrs' deaths they become members of the Mystical Body of the Christ who hallows them. They are sanctified not out side but within the Church. She is their Mother, not by the sacrament of Baptism, [of water at the font] but by proclaiming that they are her glorious children through the Baptism of blood. She gives their blood a voice to proclaim the truth of God about life, the glory of the mercy of God and the power of the Blood of Christ.'⁷¹

Those who end the life of the unborn break the divine law written in their hearts, and so objectively these unborn are rendered victims, although they do not have any opportunity of choosing to die for the truth about life.

⁷⁰ See Appendix I. Jobert, Philippe Fr. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*. Paper titled 'Holy Innocents in our times', page 114.

⁷¹ Ibid.

We find that the question concerning the children's martyrdom centres on our understanding of subjectivity and objectivity in the theology of martyrdom;

We cannot use only the subjective likeness to Christ of these children as innocent persons as proof of martyrdom, to be objective we must also look for this proof elsewhere. St. Augustine wrote (PLS2, 425): "If Christ is Truth, whoever is condemned for truth suffers for Christ, and a crown is due to him." These words concern St. John the Baptist, who was beheaded for the divine truth about marriage. More recently St. Maria Goretti and several other virgins were canonised as martyrs for chastity.⁷⁰

The children witness to the word of God, to the truth of the Commandments; 'Thou shalt not kill'. Many of these children are conceived in adulterous situations; 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' The fatherhood and motherhood of those involved in abortion has been dishonoured by themselves and by society (through legislation etc.); 'Honour your father and mother,' The lives of these children have been stolen from them by unjust laws and by others who have killed them; 'Thou shalt not steal'. 'Thou shalt not bear false witness,' the false witness of the world against these children is the cause of their deaths. A world that legislates to kill them, that says they are not human persons, and does not recognise their dignity as made in God's Image or their right to life that God has given them. In all these areas the children witness to the word of God that has been broken in their regard and to the truth. Because of what the mystery of the Incarnation means for every member of humanity, the children witness to Christ the Word made flesh, to Christ the Sacrament: "What you do to the least of my brethren you do to me." (Mt 25:40)

ordered to natural good.⁶⁵ They are deprived of the normal sacramental means of baptism yet the manner of their death is a baptism of blood. For like the Holy Innocents they die as innocence victims and witnesses to Christ, the Truth⁶⁶, the truth in the Scriptures and to the truths and teachings of the Church.

Second Objection.

‘Children cannot be considered martyrs because they do not knowingly and willingly embraced death rather than deny Christ.’

The Church’s traditional understanding of martyrdom is that the martyr is conformed to Christ and witnesses to Him and the faith; ‘Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith. The martyr...bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine.’⁶⁷ This not only encompasses supernaturally revealed truth but truths of the natural moral law. This was the case with saints such as Maria Goretti and John the Baptist who are both martyrs: they were not killed *in odium Christi*, but as witnesses to moral principles.⁶⁸ ‘The Church’s proclamation of aborted children as martyrs despite their incapacity to willingly offer their lives is of course, not without precedent. Is this not evident in claiming them as companions of the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem?’⁶⁹ What is important here is that martyrdom in the understanding of the Church has itself developed and we see examples of that development.

⁶⁵ Cf. A child seeking its mothers milk, responding to love, turning to its good and nourishment.

⁶⁶ John 14:6: Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.

⁶⁷ CCC n. 2473.

⁶⁸ Harrison Brian, O.S Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico. “Aborted infants as martyrs: are there wider implications?” Paper submitted to the Solesmes Consultation 1999 and included in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 103.

⁶⁹ Michele M. Schumacher, University of Fribourg, Switzerland. “The martyr status of the aborted child: a share in Christ’s witness to the Father of mercies.” Paper submitted to the Solesmes Consultation 1999 and included in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 73.

were baptised by the Holy Spirit. In John's Gospel Jesus refers to those born of the Holy Spirit saying 'The wind blows where it wills,'⁶² The aborted children while unable to receive water baptism at the font are not outside the Spirit's reach; "For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free and we were all made to drink of one Spirit..." (1 Cor 12:13)

We are told that 'St Thomas Aquinas observes, importantly, that babies in their mothers' wombs 'can nevertheless be subjected to the action of God, in whose presence they are living, in such wise that they achieve sanctification by some privilege of grace, as is evident regarding those who have been sanctified in the womb.'⁶³ 'The cases of Jeremiah (Jer: 1:5) and of St John the Baptist (Lk: 1:15) show that God can freely sanctify by grace a child in the womb of His mother. The similar case of Mary is a dogma of faith: viz. the Immaculate Conception.'⁶⁴

To summarise, the Church teaches the necessity of baptism which supplies God's grace so as to overcome original sin. Baptism flows from God's love for us, manifested in Jesus Christ principally through his passion, death and resurrection and is the work of the Holy Spirit. Revelation testifies to God's gift of gratuitous grace so that all men come to the knowledge of the truth and are saved, the will of unborn child presents no obstacle to this grace for its free will is not yet operative it is however

⁶¹ De Unico Baptismo Parvulorum, iv.

⁶² John 3:8: "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit."

⁶³ Aquinas, S. Th., III. Q 68, art. 11, ad 2; Quoted in a paper titled "On whether aborted children should be claimed as members of the Church?" McCarthy F. John. Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Rome. Paper submitted to the Solesmes Consultation 1999 and included in *Abortion and Martyrdom*, page 8 ff.

⁶⁴ See Appendix I. Jobert, Philippe Fr. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence*. Paper titled, 'Holy Innocents in our times', pages 112.

to Christ in suffering like His and how they are conformed to Christ in their deaths.

St. Augustine says, “The Blessed Cyprian argues with considerable reason for the thief to whom, though not baptised, it was said: “Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise” that suffering can take the place of Baptism. Having weighed this in my mind again and again, I perceive that not only suffering for the name of Christ supplies for what was lacking in Baptism, but even faith and conversion of heart, if perchance on account of the stress of the times the celebration of the mystery of Baptism is not practicable.”⁶¹ We know that the thief, who died with Christ, did not willingly give his life for Christ or the faith but he was in direct contact with Christ the Sacrament. The thief asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his Kingdom. It is also interesting to note that the good thief witnessed to the innocence of Jesus. “...[T]his man has done nothing wrong.” (Luke 23:41) One might suppose that Jesus who remembered a sinful thief and extended to him the promise of paradise, would remember the millions of innocent children who have not committed any actual sin and like Christ have ‘done nothing wrong’, do they not have a solidarity with the innocent Jesus Crucified?

John 1:33 reveals that Jesus is the one who is said to baptize with the Holy Spirit. “I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' In the Acts of the Apostles Jesus tells the Apostles “you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:4-5) The New Testament does not tell us that the Apostles received water Baptism but Jesus does tell us that they

passion, death and Resurrection. Father Jobert OSB, working from the content of the charism, shows the link between God's love for these children and a Baptism of Blood with regard to the children. The wording in the charism states: "They are baptised in the blood of My Crucifixion."

Above all, they receive the baptism of love through a Baptism of Blood, which unites them to Christ Crucified. They are killed for the divine Truth about life, which is printed in every human soul, and revealed in the Decalogue: "Thou shalt not kill". They are martyrs [martyr means witness] to the Gospel of life; for human life is the necessary receptacle of the gratuitous gift of eternal life, according to the divine purpose of Love for mankind.⁵⁹

The children's baptism therefore is a 'Baptism of Love through a baptism of blood.' St. Paul says in Romans 6:3:4: "all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." The children have been united with Christ in their death through suffering⁶⁰; 'For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.' (Rom 6:5) It will be considered in more detail later how the children are united

⁵⁸ C.f. 1 John 4: 9-10: 'God's love was revealed among us in this way: 'God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.'

⁵⁹ See Appendix I. *Theological Clarifications on the Inspiration of Divine Innocence* by Father Philippe Jobert, O.S.B.; Paper titled: 'Theological arguments for the martyrdom of children killed before birth.' Page 121.

⁶⁰C.f. Excerpt taken from message from the inspiration dated 5th June 1995. Jesus refers to part of St. Augustine's Sermon no. 329 of the Divine Office, Office of Readings, Common of One Martyr, 'Precious is the death of the martyr bought with the price of the death of Christ': Reading. 'What is that cup? It is the cup of suffering, bitter, and yet bringing salvation, the cup that a sick man would fear to touch if his physician did not drink it first. This is that cup. We recognise that cup on the lips of Christ when he says, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' Jesus. "What more bitter cup could these little ones have drunk than to be killed in the womb by their own parents and unfeeling and evil people? Yet if the Church would only claim them, their salvation is there for all to see. Let the elders of the Church recognise the cup of salvation on the lips of these children and babes!"

Chapter Three. Theological questions and possible objections.

First Objection.

The Church teaches that man through the fall of his first parents has the stain of original sin. No sin can enter heaven. These children are not baptised by water baptism at the font. How then are they washed of original sin so that they can enter heaven?

The Church professes three forms of baptism; by water, blood and desire. If it is not possible for an individual to receive baptism by the normal means i.e. by water, the same benefits can be supplied by “baptism of blood (whereby martyrdom is suffered for Christ, the Catholic Faith or for some virtue) or by “baptism of desire” (whereby a person has perfect contrition and at least the implicit intention of fulfilling God’s will for man’s salvation.)⁵⁷ The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: ‘The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ.’ (CCC n. 1258) We see that this Baptism of blood, like the desire for Baptism, brings about the fruits of Baptism. ‘God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.’ (CCC n. 1257)

The source of all forms of baptism flow from God’s love and the purpose of universal salvation. Jesus is the manifestation of God’s love⁵⁸ that love is shown particularly in his passion and death where He died for love of all mankind. We must remember that includes these children. Jesus speaks of his suffering as a baptism. Baptism for us is a share in fruits of Christ’s

⁵⁷ *Our Sunday’s Visitor Encyclopedia.* Section titled Baptism pages 45-48.

theological and doctrinal questions arising from the Church claiming these children, particularly in relation to any objections which may be raised.

martyrdom and washed in the blood of Jesus and their own blood. As St. Augustine states in one of his sermons, ‘How could the martyrs conquer, unless Christ conquered in the martyrs?’⁵⁶ The children’s martyr-witness announced world-wide would proclaim to all those implicated in the deaths of these children the evangelizing invitation to ‘Repent and believe in the Gospel.’ (Mk 1:15) As an example of the inspirational content of the charism, I quote here part of a message given to the visionary on the 25th July 1992, Jesus speaks:

“St. John the Baptist leapt for joy in the womb at My Coming! These little ones have been martyred in the womb because the truths and teaching of the Church were disobeyed or not known. But I came for them also. These are the ones spoken of in the Gospel: “He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John” (Lk 7:28). These little martyrs, martyred in the womb, have witnessed with their blood to the truth and the great Commandment, ‘Thou shalt not kill’. I too was a victim of those who broke this Commandment! Will I forget these little companions of mine? I tell you again, they died in the Blood of My Crucifixion, their innocence crucified. Their death and martyrdom, when claimed by the Church as true martyrdom, will be a mighty force against the evil of abortion. ...”

Once claimed by the Church the whole world will see that they fully part of the Communion of saints and can ask for their intercession.

Over the years both in the inspiration itself and accompanying theological work there has been both development and clarification of this request to the Church’s Magisterium to consider these children martyrs. The inspirational material will again be referred to when considering the

⁵⁶ St. Augustine. Sermon 329; ‘*Precious is the death of the martyr bought with the price of the death of Christ.*’ Divine Office, Office of Readings. First Reading from the Common of One

canonization. The charism points to the liturgical feast of the Holy Innocents as an appropriate feast for companion martyrs of the first Holy Innocents. The feast day is already in place so no new feast day needs to be established for these new martyr saints.

The inspiration also shows that there is no other ‘universal motherly body’⁵⁴ but the Catholic Church with the theological and canonical mechanisms and authority who can embrace these children as her own. The Catholic Church believes in the one Saviour who in the claiming would be proclaimed to all nations as Saviour and Lord. She preaches the one perfect Sacrifice, the Holy Lamb of God who offered Himself on Calvary to the Father for the sins of all mankind, the same Sacrifice that is perpetuated in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass every day throughout the world. The Catholic Church has the authority given by Christ to St. Peter and the Apostles and their successors; the Pope and the Bishops of the Catholic Church which provides for the authentic development of doctrine based on Christ’s definitive Revelation.

The charism puts forward that the claiming would be a sign and a signal⁵⁵ to the nations, a liturgical act that proclaims to the world that Christ has conquered all sin and death even with regard to these children. The Church would ratify for the peoples understanding, what Christ has already achieved in the children, that they are included in God’s saving plan via

⁵⁴ Cf. CCC ns.171&181.

⁵⁵ Cf. Isaiah 49:22: “Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my signal to the peoples and they shall bring your son in their bosom, and your daughter shall be carried on their shoulders.” (Isaiah 49 20-21)“The children born in the time of your bereavement will yet say in your ears: ‘The place is too narrow for me; make room for me to dwell in. Then you will say in your heart: ‘Who has borne me these? I was bereaved and barren, exiled and put away, but who has brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; whence then have these come?’” From these words it may be asked if the Church being asked to make room for these children to dwell in the Church as part of her mission to the nations?

further developed the theology stemming from this charism and submitted his findings to the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith.⁵¹ Father Jobert has worked closely with the Divine Innocence foundation in England for over 13 years to help clarify many theological points and to show how it is in accordance with Catholic doctrine.

One of the themes of the charism of Divine Innocence is the request to the Church to proclaim the martyrdom of all children deliberately killed before birth and to raise them to the Altar of the Catholic Church as ‘Companion Martyrs of the First Holy Innocents’. Widely referred to in the charism as ‘the claiming,’ it is a request to the Pope and the successors of the Apostles to carry out a solemn liturgical act of ‘claiming’ these children for Christ and his Church.⁵²

In accord with the Church’s tradition the canonization of saints is carried out by the Supreme Pontiff usually after a person’s life has been examined and found to contain nothing contrary to faith and morals. In the case of the aborted children their cause is introduced via a theological investigation rather than an investigation into their lives to discern that there is nothing contrary to faith and morals in the doctrine of the claiming and that they are in the embrace of salvation via martyrdom. Miracles are not required for martyrs.⁵³ The Pope may dispense some of the formalities usual in the canonization process, as can be seen from the recent moves to canonize Pope John Paul II. The Pope makes the formal declaration of

⁵¹During an audience with Cardinal Razinger in October 2004 Fr. Jobert submitted a dossier of his work and in April 2005 soon after the election of the Cardinal to the Papacy a further dossier of recent work was submitted to His Holiness.

⁵² The word ‘claiming’ will be used hereafter to describe the proclamation of the martyrdom of all children killed before birth.

⁵³ *Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia*, Editor, Rev. Peter M.J. Stravinskias, PH.D.,S.T.L. Our Sunday Visitor Books Huntington, Indiana 46750 1991 Section on Canonization, pages 64 -66.

lives and families Christ centred and striving to be Christ-like. It is from Christ, Our Lady and St. Joseph that we are to learn the divine order of our roles from within the Holy Family itself.

The messages, which have been given over a twenty one year period, explain the different aspects of the theology and how it accords with Catholic teaching. The inspiration and the theological clarifications drawn from it by a number of theologians have been submitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for its decision.⁴⁹ Cardinal Ratzinger pointed out that what is important in regard to judging private revelation is the ‘actualization of the definitive Revelation’ and its ‘orientation to Christ.’⁵⁰ The content of the charism shows this ‘orientation to Christ’ and its theological development seeks the ‘actualization of the definitive Revelation.’

In 1998 the key themes and insights in the inspiration were sent to all the participants of a theological consultation arranged by the Divine Innocence foundation at Solesmes Abbey France in the late summer of 1999. The result was a book printed in 2001 titled, *Abortion and Martyrdom* (Edited by Aidan Nichols, O.P.) containing a compilation of the individual papers of the theological opinions of theologians who submitted their work to the consultation. The publishing of *Abortion and Martyrdom* in 2001 encouraged theological debate on these issues, but since then Father Philippe Jobert OSB, professor of dogmatic theology and philosophy at Solesmes Abbey, who co-chaired the consultation, has

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Dossiers of theological clarifications and their updates; Fr. Francis Frost, Professor at Ars Diocesan Seminary, France; Fr. McCarthy, Superior of the Oblates of Wisdom, Rome and Fr. Philippe Jobert, O.S.B., St. Peters Abbey, Solesmes, France, have each been submitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith between 1993 and 2005.

⁵⁰ *The Message of Fatima*. Theological Commentary of Cardinal Ratzinger, section titled, ‘Public revelation and private revelations – their theological status.’

charism of prophecy, which must be scrutinised but not scorned'.⁴⁷

Referring to the role of private revelations he states that they can 'help us to understand the signs of the times and to respond to them rightly in faith.'⁴⁸ We know from history that the signs of the times are most often associated with the needs of the times. The problems associated with abortion and embryo research cover many pastoral needs for both the children killed before birth and those involved in the death of these children. The killing of these children is one of the greatest corporate sins in our time involving millions of human beings in need of pastoral care. This pastoral care is the responsibility of the Church in her mission to the nations.

The charism of Divine Innocence began in 1984, and was received by a married woman living in Surrey, England whose Christian background began in the Salvation Army. As a young girl she also attended the Baptist church, the Anglican Communion and finally entered the Catholic Church via marriage to a Catholic. The inspiration takes the form of interior locutions, visions and a dialogue between the members of the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph and the recipient of the inspiration. It touches upon many different areas of the faith, in particular the fate of all children killed before birth and how they are part of the plan of salvation. A number of theologians have discovered that the messages reveal a deeper knowledge of the theology of the Holy Family in what is called 'The Novitiate of the Holy Family': how the Holy Family is the foundational Christian family from where we learn a deeper understanding of the roles of Catholic men and women to nurture and protect the life of Christ in ourselves, in others and in our particular vocation. Making our

⁴⁷ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *The Message of Fatima*. (Theological Commentary of Cardinal Ratzinger, section titled, 'Public revelation and private revelations – their theological status.')

CTS Publications, London, 2000.

Chapter Two. The Charism of Divine Innocence.

Before looking at what contribution the charism of Divine Innocence can make to the question of abortion and the eternal fate of children killed before birth, it is first necessary to consider the role of private revelation in the Church. Speaking of private revelation, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph no. 67 states: ‘It is not their role to improve or complete Christ’s definitive Revelation, but to help live more fully by it in a certain period of history. Guided by the Magisterium of the Church, the *sensus fidelium* knows how to discern and welcome in these revelations, whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church.’ Referring to charisms, in its section on ‘The People of God’ *Lumen Gentium*, states, ‘These charisms, whether they be the more outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation for they are perfectly suited to and useful for the needs of the Church. [...] judgement as to their genuinity and proper use belongs to those who are appointed leaders in the Church, to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good (cf. Th. 5:19-21).’ (LG n. 12) A phrase that is used in the inspiration of Divine Innocence, which seems to capture the relationship between private and public Revelation says that this message is ‘a greater light of the Holy Spirit on public Revelation.’

More recently Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, when he was Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in a theological commentary to *The Message of Fatima* states, ‘In every age the Church has received the

Cardinal said that ‘the field remains wide open for a global restatement on the doctrinal level, which would go to the deepest roots of the problem and denounce the most aberrant consequence of the ‘death mentality’.⁴⁴ It leads us to ask if the Church should take a more pro-active stance in this moral issue in terms of her missionary role.⁴⁵

The focus up to now both in the Church and in this thesis has been on the moral condemnation of the killing of the unborn. The issue also raises important theological questions regarding the status and eternal destiny of these children killed before birth. The Church’s teaching is a seamless garment doctrinal and moral. The salvation of these children is not ancillary to the problem of abortion but vital to the proclamation of a ‘culture of life’.⁴⁶ Regarding these theological questions the charism of Divine Innocence has a contribution to make which we will now examine.

⁴⁴Ratzinger Cardinal Joseph. *Human Life Under Threat*. London: CTS Publications, 1991.

⁴⁵ Cf. Speaking generally about opposing moral evils such as abortion, J.J. Scarisbrick who co-founded the pro-life movement LIFE, states that it “requires heroic prophecy. Constant, heroic prophecy. We have learned that we must do more than simply refute our opponents: we have to take the initiative, challenge the world head-on”. Article titled, ‘The pro-life cause in great Britain: reflections on success and failure, on the Church’s record and the present challenge.’ Gormally Luke. (ed) *Issues for a Catholic Bioethic*. London: The Linacre Centre, 1999, page 307.

⁴⁶ Cf. EV Chapter II, section 29,34

reminds the ministers of the Church of St. Paul's words to Timothy; "Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching," (2 Tim 4:2) John Paul says that the Church 'must use appropriate means to defend the faithful from all teaching which is contrary to [the Gospel of Life].' (EV n. 82) For this to happen effectively the Church's catechesis needs to reach people and engage with them at all levels of society.

In this chapter we have presented an overview of the present situation of abortion, its causes and effects. We have looked briefly at the Church's magisterial documents and her catechetical teaching to understand how the Mother Church is trying to safeguard the flock from the 'culture of death' while at the same time calling others to the truth. Despite this, the statistics seem to show that rather than the attacks on human life diminishing, they are increasing in variety and number. Is the doctrine that is contained in these documents really reaching the people at pastoral level? The Church's condemnation of the killing of the unborn is widely known but the more fundamental philosophical and theological reasons for the dignity and sacredness of human life from conception to natural death are not widely known or understood both in and outside the Church.

In Easter week 1991, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the then Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, addressed an Extraordinary Consistory of Cardinals who met in Rome to discuss the question of abortion. Referring to the Church's past 'position statements' and 'numerous pontifical addresses on these problems or on their particular aspects' (the issue of abortion and associated 'culture of death' issues), the

⁴³ VS n. 43; Saint Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, Bk 22, Chap. 27.

directly an innocent human being.’ (DV n. 5) It recalls the teaching of the *Declaration on Procured Abortion*; “From the time that the ovum is fertilised, a new life is begun which is neither that of the father nor of the mother; it is rather the life of a new human being with its own growth.”⁴¹

With individual freedom being forwarded as a dominant issue in society today, many feel that they have the right to make a free choice regarding the right to life of the unborn child irrespective of the child’s rights. On this point, *Evangelium Vitae* states: ‘broad sectors of public opinion justify certain crimes against life in the name of rights of individual freedom, and on this basis they claim not only exemption from punishment but authorization by the State, as is seen in the legalization of abortion [and cloning].’⁴² In *Veritatis Splendor*, Pope John Paul speaks in depth about the concept of human freedom and how that freedom is misunderstood by many today because it is only understood in a subjective sense without regard to objective truth. Subjective freedom cannot take precedence over the moral law since it is God “who commands us to respect the natural order and forbids us to disturb it”⁴³.

John Paul II also voices his concern that daily new scientific and technological progress provides openings for new forms of attack on the dignity of the human being. A cultural climate is developing which give crimes against life a new and ‘even more sinister character’ (EV n. 13). Referring to the Church’s missionary responsibility, Pope John Paul II

⁴¹ Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration on Procured Abortion*. London: CTS Publications, 1990, ns.12 & 13.

⁴² EV. n. 13; Also see *Donum Vitae* n. 3: “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 appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child’s rights”.

This doctrine, based upon that unwritten law which man, in the light of reason, finds in his own heart (cf. Rom 2:14-15), is reaffirmed by Sacred Scripture, transmitted by the Tradition of the Church and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium.” (EV n. 57)

New advances in bioethics such as experimentation on embryos inside and outside the womb have given the Church cause for grave concern. In 1985 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued *Donum Vitae*, ‘Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation.’ This document was produced to clarify the Church’s position on different moral questions confronting the faithful. It ‘puts forward, by virtue of its evangelical mission and apostolic duty, the moral teaching corresponding to the dignity of the person and to his or her integral vocation.’³⁹ While showing an openness to new advancements in medical science the document reiterates Pope Paul VI’s warning to the U.N in 1965 of “the temptation [for man] to go beyond the limits of a reasonable dominion over nature”.⁴⁰ This text also states that: ‘science and technology require, for their own intrinsic meaning, an unconditional respect for the fundamental criteria of the moral law... they must be at the service of the human person, of his inalienable rights and his true and integral good according to the design and will of God.’ (DV n. 2) *Donum Vitae* draws attention to the ‘unified totality’ of the person, the fact that the human person is a unity of body and soul and that it is only ‘on the basis of this anthropological vision’ (DV n. 3) that medical decisions aimed at improving health, should be made. Throughout this document emphasis is laid on the respect due to human life from the moment of conception and ‘no one can in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy

³⁹ Vatican II. *Dei Verbum* (hereafter DV). Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*. St. Paul Editions, U.S.A., 1975. n.1, Introduction.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

God bestows upon man is much more than mere existence in time. ‘For God created man for incorruption, and made him in the image of his own eternity.’ (Wis. 2:23; EV n. 34) Speaking of the dignity God has bestowed upon man, the Psalmist says: ‘You have made him little less than a god, and crowned him with glory and honour.’ (Ps 8:5) We come to realise how great must be the value of human life when the Son of God Himself has taken it up and made it the instrument of the salvation of all humanity. (Lk 23:46; EV ns. 33-35)

Apart from stressing the gravity of breaking the natural and moral law, the Church in her documents and especially in the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, largely confronts this issue by positively proclaiming the dignity of the human person and the importance of upholding every person’s right to life. Throughout the documents of Vatican II we see again and again emphasis on the dignity of the human person, a dignity which has been exalted in virtue of Christ. In *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II’s document on the Life of the Church in the Modern world, paragraph n. 22 states: ‘by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man.’ In paragraph n. 27, we read: ‘everyone should look upon his neighbour as another self...’, ‘God the Lord of life has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life’ while ‘abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.’³⁸ John Paul II reiterates this teaching in his Encyclical on the Gospel of Life, *Evangelium Vitae*: “by the authority which Christ conferred upon Peter and his Successors, and in communion with the Bishops of the Catholic Church, I confirm that the direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being is always gravely immoral.

³⁸ Vatican II. *Gaudium et spes*, (hereafter G.S). Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*. St. Paul Editions, U.S.A., 1975. n. 51.

hesitation about the moral condemnation of abortion. (C.f. EV ns. 50, 61)
The Church insists that this doctrine is based upon the natural law and upon the written Word of God; it is transmitted by the Church's Tradition and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium.³⁶ 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 of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes. (GS. n. 51 § 3)

The Catholic Church teaches that '[f]rom the first moment of its existence, a human being must be recognised as having the rights of a person' (CCC n. 2270). However, while the Church does not definitely state that the embryo is a human person from the moment of conception;³⁷ she teaches that the embryo must be treated as such, 'defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.' (CCC n. 2274) God creates the human person in a relationship of love, with a living soul united to a human body. What the Church teaches about human dignity she draws from Divine Revelation. The biblical narrative reveals that man is made in God's image and that God's relationship with man is one of love and friendship. Man receives his dignity from his Creator, the Trinitarian God; "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness[...]'male and female he created them.' (Gen 1: 26, 27)

The life God endows the human person with, is a gift by which God shares something of Himself with his creature. Man alone is capable of knowing and loving his Creator: 'He filled them with knowledge and understanding, and showed them good and evil.' (Sir 17:7) The life which

³⁶ C.f. EV nos. 62 - 73; Cf. Vatican II. *Lumen Gentium*, (hereafter LG). Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II. St. Paul Editions, U.S.A., 1975.

A summary of the Church's teaching on right to life issues and her response to the culture of death.

The Catholic Church's position regarding abortion, embryo experiments, the dignity of the human person and the right to life has been clear from the earliest records of the Church's teaching. The Church established by Christ and founded on the Apostolic tradition teaches that "[h]uman 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."³² The Church has been very consistent over the centuries in her condemnation of abortion and the taking of innocent human life.³³ From the Church's beginnings the killing of the innocent has always been condemned, as something contrary to Divine Revelation; "You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the new-born to perish".³⁴ Tradition shows that during 'Christianity's two thousand year history this same doctrine has been constantly taught by the Fathers of the Church and by her Pastors and Doctors.³⁵ Even scientific and philosophical discussions about the precise moment of the infusion of the spiritual soul have never given rise to any

³² CCC n. 2270; Cf. *Donum Vitae* n. I, 1.

³³ CCC n. 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.'

³⁴ C.C.C. n. 2271; Didache 2,2:Sch 248,148;cf. Ep. Barnabae 12, 5:Pg 2, 777: Ad Diognetum 5, 6: PG 2, 1173; Tertullian, Apol.9: PL 1,371.

³⁵ C.f. Among the Greek ecclesiastical writers, Athenagoras records that Christians consider as murderesses women who have recourse to abortifacient medicines, because children, even if they are still in their mother's womb, "are already under the protection of Divine Providence."(n.63) (Apologia on behalf of the Christians, 35: PG 6, 969)' (E.V. n.61) 'Among the Latin authors Tertullian affirms: "It is anticipated murder to prevent someone from being born; it makes little difference whether one kills a soul already born or puts it to death at birth. He who will one day will be a man is a man already."(n.64) (Apologeticum, , IX 8: CSEL. 69, 24)' (E.V. 61) 'You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish.(Didache 2, 2: SCh 248, 148; cf. Ep. Barnabae 19, 5: PG 2, 777; Ad Diognetum 5, 6: PG 2, 1173; Tertullian, Apol. 9: PL 1, 319-320.)

The danger to handicapped children.

‘It is often claimed that the life of an unborn handicapped child or a seriously disabled person is only a relative good: according to a proportionalist approach...’(EV n.68) This has serious utilitarian connotations; a person being valued only for what they can do and their usefulness to society rather than their worth as a unique person made in God’s image. The availability of more advanced medical equipment such as ultrasound technology, instead of being used only to save life, is often used to condemn the child in the womb to death if deformities are found. Mothers of Downs Syndrome children, for example, are freely offered and indeed encouraged to have abortions. We find in society today that attacks against the child in the womb ‘can be done with total freedom and indeed with the free assistance of health-care systems.’(EV n. 21)

With some insights into the causes and effects of abortion and the destruction of embryos we are lead to ask the question what really is behind this ‘culture of death’(EV n. 12)? What is the philosophy or ideology that conditions a culture to sacrifice so many innocent lives? It seems that there is no simple answer but a combination of many reasons, the effects of worldviews, state policies, human ignorance, fear and selfishness, disobedience to the natural law, poverty, and ultimately a rejection of God, and His Commandments written on every human heart.³⁰ We are also faced with the reality of original sin, and the struggle between the forces of good and evil,³¹

³⁰ Cf. Jer 31:33: ‘But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.’

³¹ C.f. Ephesians 6:12.

more medical experiments on embryos taking place and often encouraged with the financial backing of Governments, countless numbers of unborn children die. The children's right to life and the dignity of their personhood is completely disregarded. In these so called therapeutic procedures 'the number of embryos produced is often greater than that needed for implantation in the woman's womb, and these "spare embryos" are then frozen, destroyed or used for medical research which are presented as scientific or medical progress. These procedures reduce human life to the level of simple "biological material" to be freely disposed of.'(EV n. 14)

Following the cloning of a human embryo by Korean scientists announced in the publication "Science"²⁸, Professor Gian Luigi Gigli, M.D., president of The World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations issued a statement stating that, "It is not acceptable to deliberately sacrifice the life of any human being, even if this is done in order to relieve the health problems of other human beings." In this particular procedure the Korean scientists collected 242 female eggs, from which they succeeded in cloning 30 blastocysts (early stage embryos) and from these they harvested just one colony of viable stem cells.²⁹ On May 20th 2005 it was widely reported in the British media that a group of British scientists made a celebratory announcement that the cloning of a human embryo had been achieved in Britain also!

²⁸ Details of the research are published online by the journal Science, on its Science Express website <http://www.sciencemag.org>.

²⁹ The World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations. Statement published on Zenit News Agency Dated 2004-02-26.

Family planning and health programs.

Very often family planning and health programs are a cover for rejecting children and facilitate the means for terminating pregnancies through contraceptive abortifacient and procured abortion. Scans and tests are offered to mothers to determine if the child is healthy, but if deformity is found, abortion is offered as if it were a therapeutic remedy. We see that ‘as early as 1966 the Ministry of Health in Britain held that family planning education was ‘a most important part of health education.’ The [birth control] campaigners gradually brought the representative bodies, such as the British Medical Association, the General Medical Council and the Royal Colleges, which were anti-birth control until well into the century, round to their viewpoint.’²⁴ As part of an anti-life mentality the ‘close connection which exists between the practice of contraception, eg., the morning after pill and that of abortion is becoming increasingly obvious’. (EV n.13) The various techniques of artificial reproduction, which seem to be at the service of life and which are frequently used with this intention, actually open the door to new threats against life.²⁵ Also ‘[p]renatal diagnosis, which presents no moral objections²⁶ if carried out in order to identify the medical treatment which may be needed by the child in the womb, all too often becomes an opportunity for proposing and procuring an abortion.’ (EV n.14)

Many western governments subsidise medical research that encourages experiments and procedures such as stem cell research which are carried out on both live and dead embryos. Body parts of children are collected and sold to medical establishments for experimentation.²⁷ With more and

²⁴ *The Moral Dignity of Man*. Page 16.

²⁵ Cf. *Donum Vitae*, nos. 70-102.

²⁶ *Donum vitae* nos. 1, 2.

²⁷ Appendix III; ‘Baby parts for sale’, page 219.

on third world countries can be directly related to directives set at these and earlier conferences.²³ Abortion is actively promoted as having a central role in population control policies

The use of language in order to introduce anti life agendas.

Language and its interpretation is a key area that is being targeted today for the purpose of imposing agendas and the conditioning of people's perception of what is right and wrong. Pope John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* n. 58 states: 'Especially in the case of abortion there is a widespread use of ambiguous terminology, such as "interruption of pregnancy", which tends to hide abortion's true nature and its seriousness in public perception. Perhaps this linguistic phenomenon is itself a symptom of an uneasiness of conscience.' (EV n. 58). Medical, government and legislative bodies are manipulating language in such a way as to conceal attacks upon innocent life. For example, the termination of the life of a human embryo is referred to simply as 'a therapeutic procedure.' Another term which is widely promoted today and found in the wording of many policy papers at international level is "reproductive rights". This term would seem to refer to the right of persons to reproduce i.e. to have a baby which in itself is a good and wholesome thing, but in fact the opposite is true and understood as the right to abortion, a woman's right to choose to kill her baby.

²² Ibid, page 47.

²³ Cf. *The Gender Agenda. Redefining Equality*. Chapters 3, 4, 13 & 17.

resulting in populations that are falling below replacement levels.²⁰ The drop in the birth rate has resulted in fewer and fewer young people having to support an ageing population in some countries. This is particularly so in western developed nations such as Italy and Spain, which have high rates of contraception and abortion. The paradox is that poorer countries, on the other hand, generally have a high rate of population growth, which is difficult to sustain because of low economic and social development. At the international level, intervention to help countries in the form of monetary aid from the World Bank and other loan institutions often comes with the condition to implement population control policies; contraception, sterilization and abortion.²¹ The absurdity of this is such that ‘Kenyan doctors have reported having closets full of condoms and cases of IUD’s provided by Western donors, but no latex gloves for surgery or simple antibiotics.’²²

An anti-birth worldview in many countries seems to take precedence over what is often really needed; serious social and economic family policies, programmes of educational and cultural development and fair trade, production and distribution of resources. Huge international bodies such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have been instrumental in promoting abortion and contraception at the highest international level and have organised world conferences with these agendas in mind e.g. the UN Conference on Population in Cairo in 1994 and the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Population policies imposed

²⁰ C.f. Cuddeback Kateryna Fedoryka. “Population control: the global contours of the culture of death”. Article included in *Culture of Life – Culture of Death*. Gormally Luke. (ed) London: Linacre Centre, 2002. Page 71.

²¹ Pontifical Council for the Family, *Ethical and Pastoral Dimensions of Population Trends, in Serving the Human Family*. (The Holy See at the Major UN Conferences. New York: The Path to Peace Foundation 1997: 753, par. 89) See also *Culture of Life - Culture of Death*. Page 85; ‘Population control and violation of rights.’

this way not to abort their innocent unborn child but to heroically make a statement for life.¹⁸

On a more global scale abortions are encouraged in countries as a means of population control. In some countries such as China and Tibet, women are forced against their will by state policies to have abortions with terrible physical and emotional results. For example the following is a press release by Tibetan women who travelled to the U.N. Beijing Conference of a report of an eyewitness account of the work of Chinese mobile birth control teams in Tibetan villages in 1987 states: “The villagers were informed that all women had to report to the tent for abortions and sterilizations or there would be grave consequences. For the women who went peacefully to the tents and did not resist, medical care was given. The women who refused to go were taken by force, operated on, and given no medical care. Women nine months pregnant had their babies taken out.... We saw many girls crying, heard their screams as they waited for their turn to go into the tent, and saw the growing pile of foetuses build outside the tent, which smelled horrible. During the two weeks of this mobilization, all pregnant women were given abortions, followed by sterilization, and every women of childbearing age was sterilized.”¹⁹

In India girl children are not valued as much as boys because of the cultural tradition and burden of families having to find a dowry for girls at their marriage. Because of this female babies of poor families are sometimes abandoned and left to die. A major effect of this situation is also the disturbing decline in national birth rates in many countries

¹⁸ John Paul II. *Letter addressed to Archbishop Vinko Pulijik of Sarajevo, with a message to Bosnian Muslim Women who had been raped in the conflict in that country.* Zenit News Agency, 1993.

¹⁹ O’Leary Dale. *The Gender Agenda. Redefining Equality.* USA: Vital Issues Press, 1997. Page 9.

of the very serious risks associate with induced abortion. The International Family Planning Association and the Marie Stopes Clinics say that women should be allowed to make an “informed choice” about abortion. It is questionable however; if women really are informed when often the physical and psychological damage to women from abortion is not disclosed.¹⁴ Abortion can harm a women’s present and future health, the direct effect of a so called “safe legal abortion” can result in the puncture of the uterus, bladder or bowel and can cause excessive bleeding, infection and possibly even death. Following an abortion in the Los Angeles Planned Parenthood abortion clinic, Diane Lopez, age 25, died February 28 in Los Angeles, California. The LA Coroner’s office found she had “bled to death after her cervix was punctured during an abortion.”¹⁵ Abortion can also seriously affect the future fertility of a woman as well as being linked to a significant increase in the risk of contracting breast cancer.¹⁶

Reasons given for abortion and the use of human foetal material.

Many reasons are given for abortions and justifying the use of human foetal material in medical and therapeutic procedures. It may be discovered that the child in the womb is handicapped or has a ‘so called’ genetic fault and so termination is often prescribed as the best solution. Scientists argue that they need human foetal material for medical experiments, to find cures for conditions such as Parkinson’s disease etc. Human foetal material is sold to medical research establishments and hospitals.¹⁷ Abortion is often recommended for rape victims, although we see that Pope John Paul II asked the women in Bosnia who had suffered in

¹⁴ Ibid, page 6 ff.

¹⁵ Ibid. A Summary, page 2

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Appendix: III; ‘Baby parts for sale’, page 219.

embryos up to fourteen days after fertilisation. The Abortion Act of 1967 in effect set a legal precedent for others countries world-wide to follow suit and legalise abortion.¹¹ ‘The proponents of the abortion law in Britain insisted successfully that abortion be allowed not simply for therapeutic purposes but also for social reasons,’¹² this happened also in other countries. We find that the emphasis being placed on a woman’s ‘right to choose’ either to keep or kill her baby which has come to be accepted in the public arena as a valid justification for abortion. Yet the right to the child to life is ignored.

Corporate involvement in the death of children.

Where fifty million children have been killed by abortion, twice that numbers of parents are involved also. Family members and friends of those who have abortions are often personally involved. Doctors, nurses, hospital staff and those who work in abortion clinics and scientists involved in embryo experiments are also implicated. Politicians and others who have passed legislation and laws in order to facilitate these killings directly contravene the natural and moral law. (CCC n. 2272 ff.) A serious missionary outreach to all these people is urgent.

Dangers to the health of women.

In addition to the attack on the children themselves, many abortion procedures are dangerous to women and can cause distressing medical problems.¹³ A report by the Mother and Child Campaign has highlighted the harmful effects of induced abortion. Most women are never informed

¹¹ Appendix III, page 219.

¹² Bristow Peter. *The Moral Dignity of Man..* Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1993. Page 16; C.f. Farmer Ann. *The Language of Life.* (Grounds for Abortion Act 1967) UK: St. Paul’s, 1994, pages 59 – 60.

¹³ *Women have a Right to Know, Adverse Effects of Induced Abortion,* A Report by the Mother and Child Campaign, 60a Capel Street, Dublin 1, Ireland, 2004.

Chapter One: Setting the Scene.

Abortion and embryo experiments and their effects.

Induced abortion is the deliberate termination of pregnancy by removal of the foetus from the womb. There are different horrific procedures⁷ all of which terminate an innocent babies life.⁸ The total number of abortions world-wide is estimated to be in the region of forty six million per year. The figure in reality is much higher as there are many “clandestine” abortions not reported.⁹

At the turn of the last century abortion was illegal in England as it had been according to the common law of the land from the earliest centuries.¹⁰ Society recognised that abortion not morally permissible and the civil law upheld this belief. Abortion was also illegal in order to protect women from unsafe medical procedures. However, in the latter half of the twentieth century exceptions were gradually introduced and in 1967 abortion was legalised in England and Wales allowing the conceptus to be aborted up to twenty eight weeks of the gestation period. Further modifications to the law, with the Health Services Act in 1980 and the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act in 1990, allowed the destruction of a deformed foetus up to full term and experimentation on human

⁷ Appendix III, page 219.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Kletschka Harold D. M.D. *A Treatise on Human life – An Unalienable Right*. St. Paul, MN, U.S.A.: Alethos Press LLC. 2003. Pages II, 5-78. Early records from the reign of King Ethelbert who ruled as King of Kent from 560 to 616 A.D. and was baptised by Augustine in 597 show that when he became king he established with the consent of his counsellors a code of law inspired by the example of the Romans (the Empire having become Christian after Constantine). The first of his laws was to protect those persons and doctrines he had embraced. This Catholic Tradition clearly condemned abortion. Its teaching was based on biblical revelation eg. Jer 1:5; Ps 22:10-11 and also included authoritative denouncements of abortion eg. The Didache 2,2. or The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles written between 60 and 90 A.D. (sources Chretiennes, 248,148; Paris 1942, Page 547) states ‘You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish.’ Successive English Kings continued to uphold these ordinances.

Chapter five will consider the mission of the Catholic Church in this area and ask, what are the catechetical implications of the Church proclaiming the children killed before birth as ‘Companion martyrs of the first Holy Innocents’? This is in terms of the children’s prophetic role to witness to the truth which would be facilitated by the Church, in the context of initial proclamation, evangelization and catechesis.

The murder of millions of innocent children and their eternal fate should not be treated merely as an interesting and speculative theological point. It is a serious issue not only because of the countless numbers of children who have died and still continue to be killed. Each child has two parents and there are countless other people involved in the deaths of these children. The Catholic Church has a solemn responsibility with regard to their souls that need to be called to repentance and are in urgent need of evangelization. The question of the children’s salvation is also significant because it touches on many areas of doctrine which are interlinked. The theology in this presentation shows how the children are included in God’s plan of salvation and how the Catholic Church, as part of her apostolic mission, a mandate received directly from Christ, can claim these children for Christ and His Church as ‘companion martyrs of the Holy Innocents’.

Finally, my conclusion will be a synthesis of the findings from the different areas of this study and their catechetical implications.

If the reply is affirmative, it follows that these child victims are sharers in the divine glory in Heaven. The question of the need for baptism must however be resolved in the case of these children. How could these children, who by definition have been unable to receive Baptism in the ordinary way, enter into the glory of which the grace received at Baptism is the necessary condition? These and other theological questions arising from claiming these children will be considered in this chapter and possible objections to this development will be addressed.

In chapter four I will consider the positive case in favour of the Church claiming these children and proclaiming their martyr status. The Church considers the issue of children who die before baptism an important theological issue. We see that on the 7th of October 2004, Pope John Paul II asked the International Theological Commission⁶ to look into the question of children who die without Baptism (of which the children killed in abortion and embryo experiments are a huge proportion). At that time the Pope told the Commission that this issue involves the saving Will of God, the definitive victory of Christ on the Cross and other areas of doctrine. In considering how such children are included in God's plan of salvation will inevitably bring to the fore the doctrinal issue of original sin and the necessity of baptism. The Commission put forward their findings in 2007 and these will be considered later.

In considering the positive case the question is asked: If the fullness of the law of love is to be found in Jesus Christ, (Rom 13:10) then can these children who have been denied the opportunity for water baptism through no fault of their own, be held under the bondage of the law regarding baptism? Could their baptism be a baptism of blood? The children are victims of other people's sins but have not committed actual sin themselves. If we are to understand as *Evangelium Vitae* states, 'Nothing is definitively lost' (EV 99), then how are these children included in God's saving plan? "Thou shalt not kill" is the truth about life, this commandment has been broken with regard to the children. In the positive case for these children it can be shown that the children witness to this truth with their lives. Looked at in the light of Divine Love (Jn.1. 4:16) these children cannot be excluded from God's plan of salvation but fully included in it and that their martyr witness can be shown to be, through the universal Motherly role of the Church, a mission to their own peoples and to all nations. These issues will be examined in more detail in this chapter.

⁶ John Paul II's request to the International Theological Commission to look into the 'Matter of Children who Die Without Baptism: A Nagging Question.' 7th Oct. 2004, Reported by: Zenit News Services. The World Seen from Rome, Date:7th Oct 2004 (Code: ZEO4100703) (Zenit.org)

nature of abortion, which is the killing of innocent children. This study will consider the often hidden though serious effects of abortion on women and in society. An overview will be taken of how the Catholic Church's teaching confronts the 'culture of death'⁴ and her response to life issues which involve attacks on the dignity of the human person such as induced abortion and embryo experiments.

Chapter two will consider the new insights that have been brought to the Church's attention by the charism of Divine Innocence. These insights have resulted in theological studies and debate regarding the fate of children killed before birth. A consequence of this was a theological consultation held at St. Peter's Abbey, Solesmes, France, in 1999, which considered this issue as raised by the contents of the above charism and its proposals. Since then, further theological work regarding this and related issues have been presented to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. This offers clarification for the theological basis for the Catholic Church to claim these children as 'Companion Martyrs of the First Holy Innocents.' The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that '[e]ven if Revelation is already complete, it has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith gradually to grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries.'⁵ This chapter will therefore consider the role of private revelation in the Church and will briefly look at the background to this charism.

In his Homily on the Eve of Pentecost 2004, John Paul II spoke of Ecclesial movements as being the "providential answer", "inspired by the Holy Spirit, given the present need of new evangelization." Speaking directly to those in the Church he said, "Open yourselves with docility to the gifts of the Holy Spirit! Receive with gratitude and obedience the charisms that the Spirit does not cease to offer! Do not forget that all charisms are given for the common good, that is, for the benefit of the whole Church!" It will be in keeping with the Church's understanding of the role of private revelation and charisms and in obedience to her final decision, that this inspirational and the theological material developed from it will be drawn upon.

Chapter three will consider the theological objections which may arise from the Catholic Church proclaiming the martyrdom of children killed before birth. This theological debate stems directly from the question: can the Magisterium of the Church recognize children killed by abortion and other means as martyrs, companions of the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem?

⁴ Term used in Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, (hereafter EV). CTS Publications London, 1995. n. 12.

⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (hereafter CCC). Veritas, Dublin, 1995. n. 66.

status, and invite their intercession.’¹ The evidence put forward will demonstrate that a solemn liturgical act of claiming these children for Christ and His Church is in keeping with the Church’s understanding of the liturgy as an action of Christ the Priest and of His Body, which is the Church.² I hope to show that by its very nature such an act would constitute an initial proclamation of the Gospel of Life and provide a powerful witness of the Christian message to every nation. A formal act of such magnitude would present the Church with an unprecedented opportunity for evangelization and catechesis of millions of people not only in the area of life issues but in many other areas of Catholic Christian doctrine, faith and morals. A public liturgical act of this nature would therefore have important theological and missionary implications in the Church and for the whole world.

I will strive to show that through the Church claiming these children as her own she will witness to the Church’s role as universal Mother and to her mission of bringing God’s saving love to all people. The Church herself states: ‘Proclamation is the permanent priority of mission. The Church cannot elude Christ’s explicit mandate, nor deprive men and women of the “Good News” about their being loved and saved by Christ.’³

Chapter one will briefly consider the present situation regarding abortion and how it has come to be a normal accepted practice in society today. We will look at the arguments commonly used in favor of terminating the embryo in the womb and the policy of the destruction of embryos in the name of scientific advancement. In this chapter we will look at the vast scale of abortion world-wide through procured abortion and abortifacient drugs, but also increasingly through experimentation on embryo children, the use of human foetal material in fertility treatments, therapeutic procedures to find cures for diseases and even attempts at cloning.

The original legislation for legalising abortion will be looked at and how more and more language is used in such a way that conceals the real

¹ Nichols Aidan. O.P. (ed) *Abortion and Martyrdom*. (‘Setting the question.’) England: Gracewing, 2002. Page 4. This book brought together a collection of papers which were submitted by theologians from several different countries to a Consultation held at St. Peters Abbey, Solesmes, France in 1999. Participants were asked to consider; ‘Can the Magisterium of the Church acknowledge children killed in abortion as ‘companions of the Holy Innocents’ (and therefore martyrs)? The Consultation was initiated and arranged by the Divine Innocence movement, Surbiton, England and Fr. Philippe Jobert O.S.B. of St. Peters Abbey, Solesmes and chaired by Fr. Aidan Nichols. All contributors were given a dossier of inspirational material from the charism.

² C.f. Vatican II. *Sacrosanctum concilium*, (hereafter SC) The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*. St. Paul Editions, U.S.A., 1975.

³ John Paul II. Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Missio*, (hereafter RM). CTS Publications London, 1990. n. 44.

Introduction.

This study will attempt to demonstrate that the Catholic Church, from the sure foundation of Divine Revelation and with the aid of newly discovered insights, could proceed with a positive doctrinal development regarding the eternal fate of children killed before birth (by abortion, or scientific and other medical procedures) which the Catholic Church considers contrary to the divine, natural and moral law. This thesis will attempt to show that the successor of Peter and the Magisterium have a theological basis from which to exercise the authority given to the Church by Christ, to proclaim all children put to death before birth as martyrs, ‘companions of the first Holy Innocents’. The recent charism of Divine Innocence shows that there is solid theological support for such a move in sacred Scripture and Tradition. Those theologians who have studied the inspirational material springing from this charism believe that the Church is being shown a way of salvation for the children killed before birth and with it a unique opening for on-going missionary outreach towards those directly involved in the children’s deaths and many other peoples. The claiming of these children by the Catholic Church would refute the evil of abortion and attacks against the personhood of the child in the womb. A development of this nature effectively supplies a way to universally call all those involved in the children’s deaths to repent and believe in the Gospel of Life.

In this study theological questions which may arise from such a formal proclamation by the Church will be considered and important doctrinal issues at the heart of this question will be addressed. Issues that need to be considered are the necessity of baptism, how the children are included in God’s plan of salvation and how they can be considered martyrs? According to Catholic theology, infants even in the womb, who are killed in *odium fidei* or hatred of the faith, may be regarded as having undergone a baptism of blood. While this could be proved subjectively for some individual children, the case of martyrdom for the vast numbers of other aborted children and others put to death before birth in other ways, this is not possible. All of these children have died because of a widespread culture of death and the denial of objective truth.

The question therefore we wish to raise here is whether aborted children and those killed in scientific experiments, contrary to the Commandments and the teachings of the Catholic Church, can be shown to be ‘supernaturally included within the embrace of divine redemption, to the point that the Church, by a solemn act, could declare publicly their martyr

created and loved by God and redeemed by Christ and claimed for Him and His Church. For the Magisterium to proceed and claim the children for Christ and His Church would require a profound theological deliberation, drawing upon both Scripture and Tradition to develop the Church's understanding in this matter. Such a proclamation would certainly arrest world attention; it would raise awareness of the seriousness of the abortion issue and would both inspire and require catechetical initiatives.

Abstract.

When one considers that a conservative estimation of the annual abortion figure world-wide is approximately forty-six million one can begin to comprehend the sheer size of this global problem. The use of modern abortifacient drugs such as the morning-after pill, the widespread use of contraceptive drugs, I.V.F. treatment and scientific research involving human embryos, are together the cause of many more unrecorded deaths. Countless numbers of men and women -- parents of the children, hospital staff, medical agencies and abortion clinics, doctors, nurses, and social workers etc. -- whether conscious of it or not, are in some way involved or affected by abortion and the killing of embryos through medical experiments and procedures. In many countries abortion has become socially acceptable. It may be that many people do not recognise terminating the life of the unborn child as a serious moral issue or as an issue of justice which concerns the fundamental human rights of the child in the womb. The question must inevitably be asked, is enough being done to address this problem and to correct moral attitudes in individuals and society towards the unborn child in the womb and the dignity of the human person?

There is another problem linked to the moral issue of abortion, namely the theological question concerning the salvation of those who are killed. In the Christian tradition human life is sacred and to be respected and defended, because it is a gift from God. Redeemed through Jesus Christ, it forms the basis of eternal life. Traditional Catholic teaching does not explicitly provide an explanation for the way of salvation for children who die without baptism. This means there is ambiguity over the eternal life of those who have been unjustly deprived of life.

There is a private revelation that is deeply concerned with this aspect of abortion and is asking the Church's Magisterium to consider children killed before birth as companion martyrs to the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem. Objections could be raised to the proposal, notably the biblical testimony regarding the necessity of baptism for salvation (Cf. Jn 3:5), the fact that the children do not seem to fit into the typical understanding of a martyr, and the debate over the exact moment of ensoulment. Yet, the deeper and more serious problem remains: can we leave the salvific fate of these children in ambiguity without undermining in the minds of people the definitive victory of Christ over all sin and death?

There is however a positive case to be made for declaring the children's martyr status. If proclaimed as such they not only witnesses to the truth 'Thou shalt not kill' but also to the human personhood of the unborn,

Prelude.

‘They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons;
they poured out innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and daughters,
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan;
and the land was polluted with blood.’ (Ps 106:37-38)

‘Thus says the Lord God:
Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations,
and raise my signal to the peoples;
and they shall bring your sons in their bosom,
and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.’
(Is 49:22)

‘Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord:
Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall become like wool.’ (Is 1: 18)

In the light of the Church claiming children killed before birth and their prophet and martyr witness through the Church to the world, the Benedictus (below) is particularly relevant both for the children and for those who have been involved in the killing of the children.

‘Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel!
He has visited his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up for us a mighty saviour....

A saviour who would free us from our foes,
From the hands of all who hate us.....

As for you, little child,
You shall be called a prophet of God, the Most High.
You shall go ahead of the Lord
To prepare his ways before him,...

To make known to his people their salvation
Through forgiveness of all their sin,
The loving-kindness of the heart of our God...

He will give light to those in darkness,
Those who dwell in the shadow of death
And guide us into the way of peace.’ (Lk 1:76ff)

Objections to the claiming of children killed before birth as martyrs. (April 2004)	142
The Philosophy of Divine Love.	144
The Philosophy of Divine Love	146
Three levels at which the knowledge of God is realised.	147
Why a philosophy of Divine Love?	148
Can we say that Divine Love bridges the gap between faith and reason, and that the Philosophy of Divine Love shows us how?	155
Discovering the act of being (Summa Th. 1a Q 50 a2)	155
Inner credibility of private revelations.	156

APPENDIX II. THEOLOGICAL PRESENTATION CARRIED OUT BY FATHER FRANCIS FROST OF THE DOCTRINE CONTAINED IN THE MESSAGE OF DIVINE INNOCENCE, 1993. 157

Introduction - Preliminary remarks.	158
I. The Precious Blood of Jesus.	160
II. The Hidden and Mystical Wounds of Mary.	161
III. The Baptism of Aborted Children in the Blood of Jesus.	164
IV. The Personhood of Aborted Children.	168
V. The Role of Angels.	172
VI. Aborted Children and Original Sin.	174
VII. The Share of the Church on Earth in the Salvation of Aborted Children.	178
VIII. The Responsibility of the Church.	189
IX. The Novitiate of the Holy Family.	192

APPENDIX III. ABORTION: FACTS AND STATISTICS. 199

Is Abortion Safe? Physical Complications*	204
--	------------

CHAPTER 5. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH - EVANGELIZATION, INITIAL PROCLAMATION, AND CATECHESIS.	74
Teaching Tools for Catechesis.	79
The place of Liturgy in catechesis.	80
Means of communication.	80
Creedal Catechesis.	81
Raising awareness to the theology of Vatican II.	82
Evangelising Activity and the Dignity of the Human Person.	83
Catechesis for conversion and re-evangelization.	83
CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION.	85
POSTSCRIPT	90
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	92
APPENDIX I. THEOLOGICAL CLARIFICATIONS BY FATHER PHILIPPE JOBERT, OSB., MONK AND THEOLOGIAN OF SOLESMES ABBEY, FRANCE, ON THE MESSAGE OF DIVINE INNOCENCE, SURBITON, SURREY, ENGLAND.	99
Terminology.	101
That which unites the claiming of children killed before birth and the Novitiate of the Holy Family.	105
Crucified innocence and Divine Innocence – the case of aborted children.	106
Holy Innocents in our times.	107
Post scriptum: “Can the Magisterium of the Church acknowledge children killed in abortion as companions of the Holy Innocents and therefore as martyrs?”	111
Covenant.	112
Theological arguments for the martyrdom of children killed before birth.	114
A theological precision about unborn children’s martyrdom.	118
The Divine Principle of Martyrdom	119
Baptism of Love - children killed before birth.	119
Communion of Saints and children killed before birth.	120
The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the claiming of the slaughtered children.	121
Thanksgiving in Mass and aborted children.	124
Kings, Priests, Prophets - aborted children's participation in Christ's threefold office.	125
Our Lady of the Hidden and Mystical Wounds.	126
Mary’s Motherhood.	128
Certainties regarding the fate of children killed in the womb.	129
Martyrdom – children killed before birth.	130
Witness.	133
Consecration in the truth.	134
Glory.	134
Duty of the Church regarding aborted children.	134
Weakness.	136
Helplessness and Innocence.	136
Sacrifice.	136
Limbo, no.	137
Against Jansenism.	139
Brief explanations of key theological themes in relation to the children.	141

<i>There are too many children to claim. The Church could instead claim one child of whom it could be proved that it died in “odium fidei” to represent all the other children killed before birth. [An example of this would be that the baby was killed because it was a Catholic.]</i>	50
Sixth Objection.	51
<i>‘You are asking the Church to claim children who would be killed in the future.’</i>	51
Seventh Objection.	51
<i>‘You cannot prove a child in the womb receives grace.’</i>	51
Eight Objection.	52
<i>‘We do not know when the soul is present therefore the Church cannot claim all children killed before birth’.</i>	52
Ninth Objection.	54
<i>What of children who die naturally such as children who die through miscarriages?</i>	54
Tenth Objection.	55
<i>‘What about other innocent children who have been killed after birth such as street children in South America who have been murdered as a means of dealing with a social problem, can one differentiate?’</i>	55
Eleventh Objection.	56
<i>The children go to Limbo therefore there is no need for the Church to claim them, they enjoy a natural happiness.</i>	56
CHAPTER 4. THE POSITIVE CASE.	59
Development of doctrine in the Church.	59
The claiming and the Holy Trinity.	59
Children killed before birth and Christ’s mission.	60
Children killed before birth and the Holy Spirit.	61
The Church and God’s Plan of Salvation.	61
Children killed before birth and Christ’s Prophet, Priestly and Kingly role.	63
The claiming and Sacred Scripture.	64
The claiming and Sacred Tradition.	67
Children killed before birth and the law.	67
Children killed before birth and righteousness.	68
Children killed before birth and the first Holy Innocents.	68
Children killed before birth as virgin martyrs.	70
The work of Christ and the Mission of the Church.	71

Contents

PRELUDE.	9
ABSTRACT.	10
INTRODUCTION.	12
CHAPTER ONE: SETTING THE SCENE.	17
Abortion and embryo experiments and their effects.	17
Corporate involvement in the death of children.	18
Dangers to the health of women.	18
Reasons given for abortion and the use of human foetal material.	19
The use of language in order introduce anti life agendas.	22
Family planning and health programs.	23
The danger to handicapped children.	25
A summary of the Church's teaching on right to life issues and her response to the culture of death.	26
CHAPTER TWO. THE CHARISM OF DIVINE INNOCENCE.	33
CHAPTER THREE. THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS.	40
First Objection.	40
<i>The Church teaches that man through the fall of his first parents has the stain of original sin. No sin can enter heaven. These children are not baptised by water baptism at the font. How then are they washed of original sin so that they can enter heaven?</i>	40
Second Objection.	44
<i>'Children cannot be considered martyrs because they do not knowingly and willingly embraced death rather than deny Christ.'</i>	44
Third Objection.	47
<i>The children could exercise their free will against God and reject Him.</i>	47
Fourth Objection.	48
<i>By claiming these children, it could encourage abortions if people thought that their child would become a saint. It may be argued that it would be better to kill the child rather than bring it into the world where it might suffer such things as poverty and sickness.</i>	48
Fifth Objection.	50

Abbreviations.

CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CA	Centesimus Annus
CL	Christifideles Laici
CT	Catechesis Tradendae
DV	Dei Verbum
EN	Evangelii Nuntiandi
FC	Familiaris consortio
GDC	General Directory of Catechesis
GS	Gaudium et Spes
LG	Lumen Gentium
RM	Redemptoris Missio
SC	Sacrosanctum Concilium
VS	Veritatis Splendor
R.	Reading.

Acknowledgements.

I wish to thank Fr. Philippe Jobert, OSB, Fr. Francis Frost, for their theological clarifications, Dudley Plunkett for his direction, and Mrs Helen Weston for proof reading the text of this thesis. I would also like to thank the staff of Maryvale Institute, Birmingham, for all their help and advice and the help of the Divine Innocence Community.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to all children killed before birth, in memory of their silent suffering. I place their cause in the hearts of Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph for the Glory of the Most Blessed Trinity.

Theological and Catechetical implications of the Church proclaiming children killed before birth as companions of the first Holy Innocents.

Patricia de Menezes.

© 2005, 2007 Copyright: Patricia de Menezes,

All rights reserved. No part of this thesis may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, tape recording, or otherwise without the written permission of the author Patricia de Menezes, 29 The Byeways, Surbiton, England. No part of these writings may be reproduced in any language whole or in part without the written permission of the author Patricia de Menezes.

The Family of Divine Innocence acknowledges this copyright.
Patricia de Menezes

Second Edition 2007