

Abortion Legislation Statement

As Catholic Bishop of Hong Kong, I wish to make a statement concerning the amendment to the legislation on abortion which has just been passed. I address myself primarily to Catholics, but also to Christians of various denominations, and, indeed, to all people of good will.

I raise my voice in defence of life! I speak for those who are voiceless. Unborn children are silent, but as developing human beings, they exist and live among us. They are part of our human family just as they are your own sons and daughters at home.

The unborn, whether suspected of a handicap or not, have the same right to life that you and I enjoy. If we ignore or deny this right, we discriminate against the weak and helpless. Such discrimination against unborn children not only denies that they belong to the human family, but also threatens our own humanity.

In proclaiming that abortion, at whatever stage of pregnancy, is wrong, the Church speaks for the human rights and dignity of us all, not just for the unborn. The right of the innocent to live is essential to our civilization.

Once this right is denied or suppressed, no other human rights are secure. Once a climate of opinion is fostered which denies to the handicapped child before birth the right to live, the way is open for the same discriminatory treatment to the handicapped child after birth. The child before or after birth whether handicapped or not is truly one of us.

Moreover, the Church does not speak out against the destruction of human life merely to defend a doctrine of its own moral teaching. Rather, the Church wants to uphold and protect the right to life belonging to every individual human being, irrespective of faith, age or race even if the law should fail in its duty to protect the weakest members of our society. What is legal is not necessarily moral. Wrong is always wrong even when the majority says it is right.

Declaring an abhorrence to the extermination of unborn children, the Church positively proclaims essential human values. A stand against abortion is a stand for humanity. Abortion is not a Catholic issue only, and it is not even a specifically religious issue. It is a fundamental human concern and as such it affects us all.

We all understand that the question of abortion

poses many problems - moral, physical, psychological, economic. A truly human response and constructive solution to these problems cannot be easily found by any one of us. The complexity of this sad social dilemma demands that we make honest efforts to work together.

This is a real challenge that faces us, to search for creative and humanizing solutions that strengthen the fabric of Hong Kong society, rather than to opt for facile answers that can only fragment our community.

We must encourage one another to be more compassionate and concerned for those in distress, particularly the young and those who cannot cope; we must support and help them in practical and positive ways which do not involve the destruction of human life. We earnestly wish to see these efforts increase and intensify so as to remove the social and economic pressures which make abortion seem such a temptingly immediate escape.

+ John Baptist Wu

The Bishop of Hong Kong

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