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Orthodox hierarchs oppose Argentinian pro-abortion bill



On November 19, four Orthodox hierarchs serving in Argentina issued a protest announcement against a proposed bill that would legalize abortion.

In their announcement, “Orthodoxy for Life,” Metropolitan Joseph of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Metropolitan James of the Patriarchate of Antioch, Bishop John of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and Bishop Kirilo of the Patriarchate of Serbia, emphasize that, “As Orthodox Christians, we believe that our lives are not a mere physical accident but a precious gift from God.”

Human life begins at conception as a gift from God, the hierarchs emphasize, and thus they absolutely cannot agree that life is an accident that can be disposed of.

Their announcement reads in full:

The Argentine Orthodox Churches are in favor of life and, consequently, against abortion, as an arbitrary, individualistic and unilateral action to suspend the course of a new life, which comes from the giver of all life, God.

As Orthodox Christians, we believe that our lives are not a mere physical accident but a precious gift from God. As we confess in the Holy

Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, being “called from nonbeing into being,” every life has the gift of eternal life. It is God himself Who invites us to become living signs of His unconditional love; a love that we cannot even imagine or understand; a love that is perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ and that is expressed in the life of every creature.

We have no doubt that human life begins at the moment of conception. We believe and affirm that each of us is desired by God according to His age-old plan and, therefore, we can in no way accept the position that human life is a natural accident, or that every creature in the womb of his mother does not have the same dignity as every human being—as well as the right to life, in fact—because his evolutionary level does not allow him yet. For our theological tradition, from the moment of his conception and forever after, a man is a person, a complete human being, that is, a multidimensional being in relation to all creation, created in the image of God and called to reach the likeness of God Himself.

With the dramatic health situation we are experiencing both in our country and around the world due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and having already lost hundreds of thousands of fellow human beings, we want to highlight our concern and responsibility for human life and for the protection and care of every human being from the moment of his conception until the end of their existence.

Similarly, we are surprised that in this dramatic and sensitive context in which we live today, it is a priority to address the so-called “law of voluntary termination of pregnancy” in the National Assembly.

We hope that the representatives of our nation in Parliament will dedicate their skills and moral beliefs to the promotion and enactment of laws that favor the lives of all the citizens of this country, that is, that will support and support motherhood and childhood, support the family as the essential environment for the development of young life, improve public health, support decent work, educate young people, and help those who wish to emerge and work with dignity, with the conviction that our life is not accidental, but a sacred gift from God.

A footnote in the announcement reads:

Moreover, in the Tradition of our Church, the Holy Fathers of the

Ecumenical Councils confirmed in a shocking way the mystery of human life and regeneration by interpreting the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son and the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ with the Most Holy Theotokos being the first man of the new life, as noted by the great Father of our Church, St. John of Damascus: *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, ch. 12 (56):

“For the Word Himself became flesh, having been in truth conceived of the Virgin, but coming forth as God with the assumed nature which, as soon as He was brought forth into being, was deified by Him, so that these three things took place simultaneously, the assumption of our nature, the coming into being, and the deification of the assumed nature by the Word. And thus it is that the holy Virgin is thought of and spoken of as the Mother of God, not only because of the nature of the Word, but also because of the deification of man’s nature, the miracles of conception and of existence being wrought together, to wit, the conception the Word, and the existence of the flesh in the Word Himself. For the very Mother of God in some marvellous manner was the means of fashioning the Framer of all things and of bestowing manhood on the God and Creator of all, Who deified the nature that He assumed, while the union preserved those things that were united just as they were united, that is to say, not only the divine nature of Christ but also His human nature, not only that which is above us but that which is of us.”