

Who Should We Listen to Regarding Contraceptives and the Avoidance of Having Children?

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A note on spelling: Apart from direct quotes, this book is written in the version of English that is standard in Australia—British English. Some examples used in this book are: honour, fertilised, baptised, practise, fulfil, canonised, judgement, and defenceless.

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~ Introduction ~

We Are Living in Times of Confusion

Without a doubt, we are living in very confusing times. Orthodox Christians want to know the truth about various matters, including contemporary issues. **Yet, when they turn to the Church, many often find that there is either silence or differing views from those who are meant to be reliable guides for Orthodox Christians** such as bishops, priests, monastics, theologians, teachers of religion, and Orthodox bioethicists (some of whom are also clergymen). As a result, Orthodox Christians are finding it extremely difficult to navigate through these times of confusion.

Some topics that have especially caused confusion are contraceptives, abortion, and the avoidance of having children. On the issue of abortion, all Orthodox Churches throughout the world agree that this is a great sin—that this is murder. However, when it comes to contraceptives and the avoidance of having children, there is either vagueness, silence or divided opinions from our Church's authorities to whom the faithful look for direction. There is also much silence or misinformation from the medical and scientific communities regarding contraceptives, and the side effects and health risks associated with them. **How then are the faithful supposed to know the truth about childbearing, abortion, and contraceptives (hormonal contraceptives, copper IUDs, barrier methods such as condoms and spermicides, and natural birth control methods)?**

There are some in the Church who teach about these and other topics by quoting the Holy Bible, the Holy Canons, and the Holy Fathers, but unfortunately they often quote them incorrectly. Church history tells us that synods, individual bishops, priests, monastics, and theologians can, and do, make mistakes at times. As we read in the lives of saints, even the saints occasionally fell into error. If this is the case, **Orthodox Christians should ask themselves if there is a sure way to know what the Church's true teachings are regarding any topic.** How can we be sure that what we are hearing or reading is the truth? Who should we listen to? Whom do we trust?

His Eminence, Metropolitan Neophytos of Morphou, Cyprus, gives us the answer to these questions: “We listen to whatever the God-bearing saints tell us. That’s how we were taught by Saint Porphyrios, by Saint Iakovos,



and Saint Paisios, who would say, ‘Listen to the saints, my son.’ The bishops can make mistakes. The patriarchs can make mistakes. Synods can make mistakes. **Where you have saints that agree, you don’t have mistakes!** This is called agreement [consensus] of the Fathers. Difficult days are coming, or rather they have come, and we will not know who to listen to. My advice, as the Bishop of Morphou, is to listen to the God-bearers.”

Who are these God-bearers that we are meant to listen to? They are the Holy Fathers, saints, holy elders and eldresses, and even holy laypeople who have reached a high level of spirituality and who all teach the same about any given topic. **The wonderful thing is that when all the God-bearers agree with each other about a particular teaching, we know that the Holy Spirit is speaking through them.** When this occurs, there are no mistakes.

The rule given to us by Saint Vincent of Lerins, and agreed to by all the God-bearers, is that an Orthodox teaching is “that which is believed everywhere, always, and by all.” In other words, an Orthodox teaching is what has been believed by all Eastern Orthodox Churches in the world, throughout the centuries, and by all the faithful. **If the clergy and pious Orthodox Christians follow this rule, they will not fall into error, heresy, schism, deception, and immorality.**

Thanks be to God that there are pious bishops, priests, monastics, theologians, etc., who know the truth and, without fear or weakness, guide the Orthodox faithful correctly. **It is these guides that we should listen to. They are worthy of our trust because they are truly Orthodox in that they ‘listen to the God-bearers’ and transmit their teachings to the faithful.** Through the prayers of our holy God-bearers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, enlighten us, have mercy on us and save us. Amen!

~ Chapter 1 ~

When Life Begins, According to the Orthodox Church and the Scientific Community

Should the Orthodox Church get involved?

Many people feel that the use of contraceptives is a medical issue and should therefore be discussed only with their doctor. However, because **there is a growing number of people in the medical community who acknowledge that hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs can cause abortions**, the Orthodox Church has a great responsibility to be involved in this issue because abortion is a great sin, even if committed unknowingly.

According to the publication titled *World Family Planning 2022*, by the United Nations, approximately 410 million women in the world use some type of hormonal contraceptive or the copper IUD. This raises important questions: Are all these women aware of the chemicals they are ingesting? Do they know exactly what these devices do when implanted in their bodies? Do they really understand the effects of these contraceptives? The truth is that not only can these contraceptives cause abortions, but they are also associated with serious side effects and health risks. **Unfortunately, not all of these side effects and health risks have been made readily available to the public. Some have even intentionally been concealed or downplayed, particularly the neurological and psychological symptoms that many women experience.** Women themselves will likely agree that they are rarely, if ever, told about the serious side effects when prescribed these contraceptives.

What Orthodox Christians need to know is that many of our saints, pious clergy, and grace-filled elders and eldresses recognise, as do pro-life medical professionals, that these contraceptives can cause abortions. The difference between these two groups is that the medical professionals look only at the issue of killing a living human being, whereas the enlightened servants of God reveal that **there are also spiritual consequences of the sin of abortion, whether committed intentionally or unintentionally.**

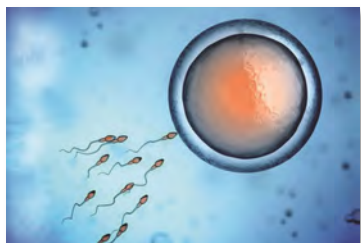
The Orthodox Church acknowledges that **sins committed unknowingly are not on the same level of seriousness as those committed knowingly**, but they are still significant, and do have consequences.

While reading this book, one should not fall into despair nor react negatively against those who have been enlightened by God, for what they say is not their own words but God's words. Their teachings may sound harsh, but the reason for this is their great love for our souls and, ultimately, for the salvation of our souls. They assure us that **God grants us forgiveness through repentance, confession, and producing fruits worthy of repentance—thanks be to God for His love and His mercy!**

When does life, and therefore pregnancy, begin?

Until some decades ago, it was universally accepted as a scientific fact that **human life, and therefore pregnancy, begins at the moment of conception**—that is, when an egg is fertilised by a sperm to form an embryo in a process called fertilisation (as shown in the image below). Conception is the point at which the genetic material from the female's egg (an ovum) and the male's sperm join together to form a new human life, with its own complete and unique human genetic makeup.

Human embryologists are the modern scientific experts in the area of human development. They acknowledge that immediately beginning at fertilisation, the embryo is indeed a newly created human being, that is, the fusion of an egg and sperm immediately results in the creation of a new, genetically distinct, human being.



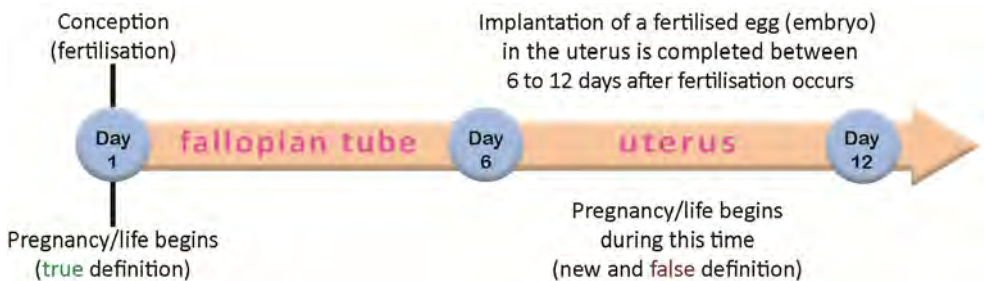
Life begins at the time of fertilisation, that is, when a sperm cell combines with an egg (ovum) to form an embryo. Pregnancy begins at this exact moment.

What shook the scientific community in the mid-1960s?

For the first modern scientists who studied this question, there was never really a serious issue of when life, and therefore pregnancy, begins. However, **after the mid-1960s, a controversy began because many in the scientific community, contrary to the embryologists, unjustifiably changed the official definition.** The new definition stated that life, and therefore pregnancy, begins at the time when a fertilised egg implants in the uterus, which is 6-12 days after fertilisation. This will be explained in more detail in Chapter 3, but it is enough to say here that **this false change in definition allowed the modern medical establishment to hide, from those who are pro-life, the fact that hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs can cause abortions before implantation. Some can even do so after implantation** (that is, the “emergency contraceptive pill”, also known as the “morning after pill” or “Plan B”).

This secrecy enabled the widespread acceptance and promotion for profit of these contraceptives within societies worldwide. Above all, the new definition satisfied the pro-abortion and pro-birth control activists who wanted to limit (and still do) the number of people born in the world.

This change in the definition of when human life begins was perhaps the most unscientific and deceitful manipulation the scientific community had ever seen. Not all scientists accepted the new definition, and consequently a controversy erupted in the scientific world. The following diagram shows both the true and the false definitions of when life/pregnancy begins.



When does life begin, according to the Orthodox Church?

It is important to understand that the Holy Orthodox Church has always believed that human life, and therefore pregnancy, begins at the time of conception. This is the exact moment when an embryo is created. The embryo is a newly-conceived human being, with a soul destined for eternal life. It is therefore holy from its very beginning.

From the point of conception until birth, the newly-created human being is referred to as an embryo in the writings of the Church. Therefore, what the Orthodox Church has taught for over 2,000 years, and the true scientific definition that life begins at the moment of conception, are in complete agreement.

The Orthodox Church celebrates three conceptions in the wombs of their mothers: that of Christ (25 March), that of the Theotokos (9 December), and that of Saint John the Baptist (23 September). Christ's conception is included, even though it was supernatural, that is, not by a man and woman. These holy celebrations demonstrate that **the Orthodox Church views conception not only as the beginning of human life but also as something sacred**. Apart from the celebrations mentioned above, the Holy Ecumenical Councils, all our Holy Fathers, and all of the saints of the Orthodox Church agree that life begins at the very moment of fertilisation, that is, at conception.



What do the saints & pious clergy say about when life begins?

Saint Paisios the Athonite (†1994): “Parents need to understand that life begins at the moment of conception.”

Elder Athanasios Mitilinaios, Greece (†2006): “The sperm enters, meets the egg, and conception begins... the embryo begins its life... **From the moment a human being is conceived in a woman, the child is human.** From that moment!”

Saint Cleopa of Sihastria, Romania (†1998): “By the power of God, at the moment when the parents come together, both body and soul are conceived in the womb of the mother, and the child begins its existence... **The embryo has a living soul, created by God from the very moment of conception.**”

Saint Gregory of Nyssa (†394): “There is no question about that which is formed in the womb [uterus]... The point of commencement of existence is one and the same for body and soul... **Soul and body have one and the same beginning...**”

Metropolitan Neophytos of Morphou, Cyprus: “Man starts to exist from the exact moment of conception. This is when the husband’s sperm cell is captured by the wife’s egg.”



Saint Cleopa



Saint Gregory



Saint Paisios

Saint Basil the Great (+379): “We do not have a precise distinction between a developed embryo and an undeveloped embryo... any hairsplitting distinction as to its [the embryo] being developed or underdeveloped is unacceptable.”

In Canons 2 and 8 of Saint Basil the Great’s Canons (that the entire Orthodox Church accepts), we read that **there is no difference between**



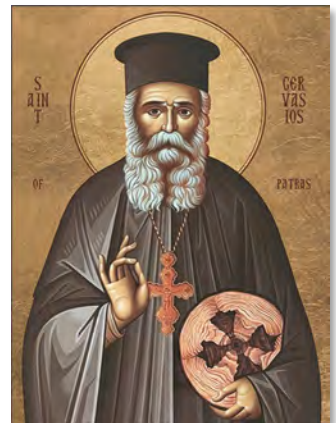
an embryo in the beginning stages of development and an embryo in the later stages of development because both are living human beings. It seems that in his days there was confusion (as there is today) regarding whether an embryo in its very first stages was different from an embryo in the more developed stages. Saint Basil categorically states that there is no difference.

Saint Gervasios Paraskevopoulos, Patras, Greece (+1964)

Saint Gervasios, a Greek archimandrite, states that even if one cannot see a newly conceived embryo using the images of an ultrasound,* the embryo is still a human being that, on the Day of Judgement, will resurrect like those who were born into the world. He says:

“Image or no image, even if the embryo lives only one hour from conception, this child, on the day of judgement, will resurrect as all human beings, as one 33 years of age...”

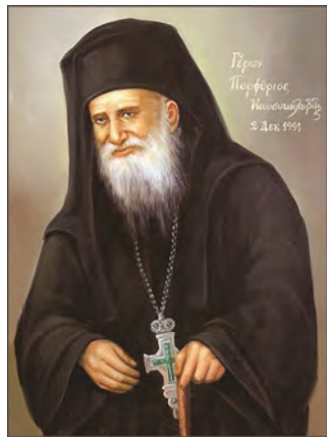
* There is usually no image of an embryo from a typical ultrasound scan for the first 6 to 8 weeks of a pregnancy. Some pro-choice activists argue that if there is no image then the embryo is not human, which is plainly wrong, as are all of their other pro-choice arguments.



Saint Porphyrios of Kafsokalivia, Mount Athos (+1991)

Saint Porphyrios is one of the greatest Orthodox God-bearers of the 20th century. He became widely known for his gifts of spiritual discernment. For this reason, what the Saint says about conception should not be ignored:

“A child’s upbringing commences at the moment of its conception. The embryo hears and feels in its mother’s womb. Yes, it hears and it sees with its mother’s eyes. It is aware of her movements and her emotions, even though its mind has not developed. If the mother’s face darkens, it darkens too. If the mother is irritated, then it becomes irritated also. Whatever the mother experiences—sorrow, pain, fear, anxiety, etc.—is also experienced by the embryo.



Saint Porphyrios

“If the mother doesn’t want the child, if she doesn’t love it, then the embryo senses this and traumas are created in its little soul that accompany it all its life. The opposite occurs through the mother’s holy emotions. When she is filled with joy, peace and love for the embryo, she transmits these emotions to the embryo mystically, just as happens to children that have already been born.

“For this reason, a mother must pray a lot during her pregnancy and love the child growing within her, caressing her abdomen, reading psalms, singing hymns and living a holy life. This is also for her own benefit. But she makes sacrifices for the sake of the embryo so that the child will become more holy and will acquire, from the very outset, holy foundations. **Do you see how delicate a matter it is for a woman to go through a pregnancy? Such a responsibility and such an honour!”**

Excerpt taken from the book *Wounded by Love – The Life and Wisdom of Elder Porphyrios*, in the chapter, “On the Upbringing of Children”.

~ Chapter 2 ~

Hormonal Contraceptives and Copper IUDs

What are hormonal contraceptives?

A woman's body naturally produces the hormones **estrogen** and **progesterone**. These two hormones are vital to a woman's normal reproductive development and fertility.

Hormonal contraceptives are a type of birth control that uses steroids and synthetic (artificial) forms of the natural hormones estrogen and/or progesterone to prevent pregnancies. Progestins are lab-created (synthetic) forms of progesterone. There are also many synthetic forms of estrogen.

These synthetic hormones act differently than the natural hormones in a woman's body, contributing to many side effects and health risks. Hormonal contraceptives that are available today contain either:

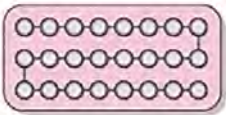
- i) a combination of a manufactured estrogen and a progestin, or
- ii) a progestin alone.



What are the six types of hormonal contraceptives?

There are six types of hormonal contraceptives on the market today:

- ♦ **Oral contraceptive pills** (such as “the pill”, the “mini-pill”, or the “emergency contraceptive pill”, also known as the “morning after pill” or “Plan B”)
- ♦ **Intrauterine devices**, abbreviated as **IUDs** (such as Mirena, Kyleena, Skyla, and Liletta)
- ♦ **Implants** (such as Norplant, Jadelle, Implanon, and Nexplanon)
- ♦ **Contraceptive rings** (such as NuvaRing)
- ♦ **Birth control patches** (such as Evra, Xulane, Twirla, and Zafemy)
- ♦ **Injectables** (such as Depo-Provera, DMPA, and NET-EN).



Oral contraceptive pills



Intrauterine devices (IUDs)



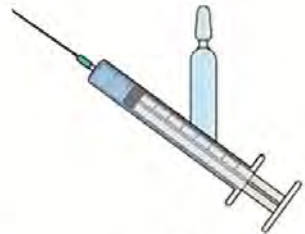
Implants



Contraceptive rings



Birth control patches



Injectables

What is an IUD?

As mentioned, IUD stands for intrauterine device. It is a type of birth control made of a non-reactive, flexible plastic material such as polyethylene. It can come in different shapes, but usually an IUD is a small, T-shaped device that is inserted into the uterus (womb) by either a doctor or a nurse. **IUDs contain active chemicals or elements that are slowly released into the woman over a period of several years** (sometimes up to 10 years). There are two types of IUDs—hormonal (containing progestin only) and non-hormonal (containing copper).



Hormonal IUD
(progestin)



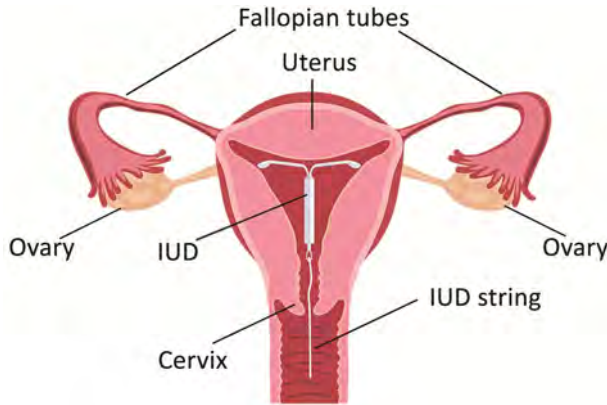
Non-hormonal IUD
(copper)



This photograph shows the significant size of an IUD when compared to the size of a human hand. The average dimensions of the uterus in an adult female are about 8 cm long, 5 cm across, and 4 cm thick. The dimensions of an IUD are about 3.6 cm long and 3.2 cm across, or a bit smaller. Dimensions can vary by brand and model. The diagram on the next page shows how an IUD is situated in the uterus.

Although they work in different ways, **both hormonal and copper IUDs can cause abortions. Both are also associated with serious side effects and health risks**, many of which have not been made readily available to the public—more on this in Chapter 4.

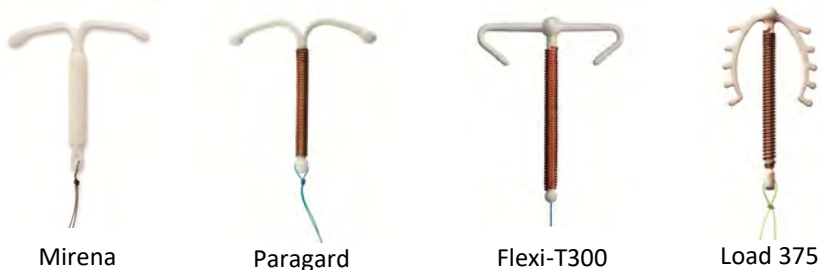
How do hormonal IUDs and copper IUDs differ?



In the case of **hormonal IUDs**, a progestin (a synthetic form of progesterone) is released within the uterus, and its effects can even reach the cervix and ovaries. Progestin in hormonal IUDs causes many side effects and health risks. Examples of hormonal IUDs are Mirena, Kyleena, Skyla, and Liletta.

As for the **non-hormonal copper IUD**, after it is inserted into the uterus, copper elements are released which can affect the entire reproductive system of a woman. The presence of the copper from the IUD produces an inflammatory reaction, which creates a toxic environment throughout the woman's reproductive system, in organs such as the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, cervix, and vagina. Examples of copper IUDs are Paragard, Load 375, Liberté, Flexi-T300, Mona Lisa, Neo-Safe T380 and Nova T380.

The following diagram shows the different **horrific-looking shapes of the highly effective, embryo-killing IUDs**.



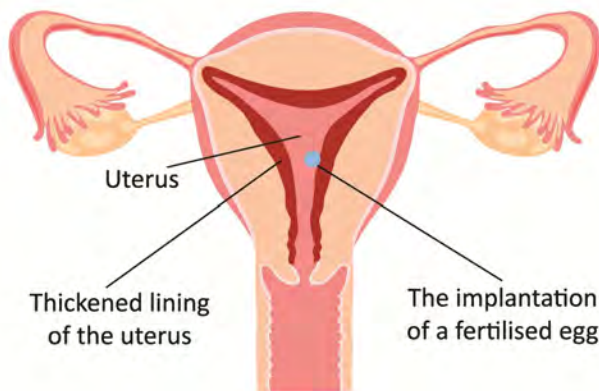
~ Chapter 3 ~

How Hormonal Contraceptives and Copper IUDs Can Cause Abortions

To understand how hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs can cause abortions, we first need to have a more thorough knowledge of what happens during a woman's reproductive cycle. **A deeper understanding of this reproductive cycle is needed to uncover the vast lies being told.**

Every month, the lining of the uterus (endometrium) begins to build up supportive tissue by thickening. The purpose of this is to provide the necessary nourishment (blood supply) and nurturing in anticipation of a fertilised egg (embryo) attaching to the lining of the uterus. The process of when a fertilised egg attaches to the lining of the uterus is called implantation. This will be explained in more detail in the next section.

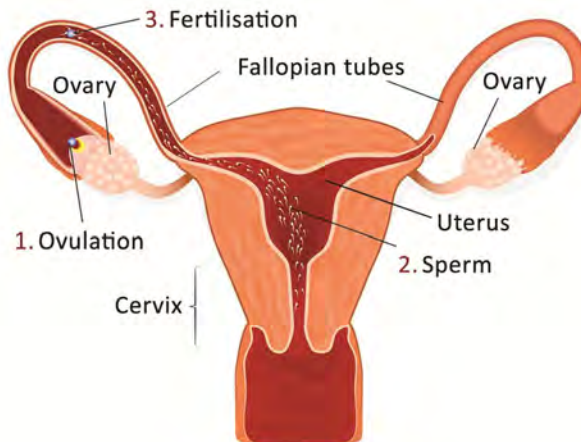
The lining of the uterus can thicken anywhere between 7 and 16 mm. A minimum thickness of about 7 mm is needed for a successful implantation of a fertilised egg (although there have been rare cases of a successful pregnancy with a thickness of 5.8 mm).



A successful implantation due to a thickened endometrium

How long can it take for fertilisation to occur after ovulation?

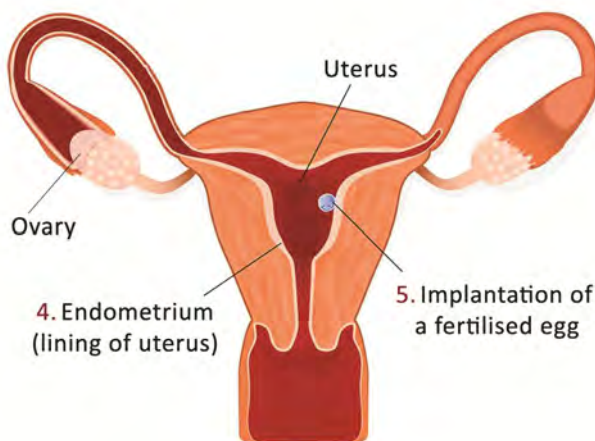
Approximately 8 to 9 days after the lining of the uterus begins to thicken, one of the ovaries releases an egg (ovum) into the associated fallopian tube, in a process called ovulation¹ (see diagram below). On certain rare occasions, an ovary releases two eggs. **After ovulation, the egg lives for 12 to 24 hours** and must be fertilised in that time if a woman is to become pregnant. After sexual intercourse, it may take anywhere from less than an hour to five days for a sperm² cell to join with the egg that is in the fallopian tube (see diagram below). **A healthy sperm can live up to 2-5 days once inside the body of a woman.** As mentioned, the process of an egg joining with a sperm is called fertilisation³ or conception, and it is the exact moment when pregnancy begins, not at a later time. **The fertilised egg (embryo) is a newly conceived child with a soul, and not, as we are led to believe, a “cell”, or “clusters of cells”, or “clumps of cells”, or “a mass of non-human living tissue”. These terms were intentionally created in order to dehumanise the embryo before implantation.** This deceit continues to our day and has been accepted by millions worldwide. The consequence of this deceit and ignorance is the destruction of hundreds of millions of embryos every year. How does this occur? The answer is simple but horrific—abortion through contraceptives.



Ovulation and fertilisation of an egg (ovum)

What happens after fertilisation?

In a normal pregnancy, the fertilised egg (embryo) stays in the fallopian tube for up to 6 days. Within 24 hours of being fertilised, it starts dividing fast into many cells. During this time, the fertilised egg slowly travels through the length of the fallopian tube towards the uterus. Once the fertilised egg enters the uterus, it attempts to attach to the thickened endometrium, also called the lining of the uterus⁴ (see diagram below). It can take a fertilised egg 1 to 6 days to attach. If the attachment is successful, the newly conceived child (embryo) continues growing. This process is known as implantation⁵. **This means a fertilised egg can live up to 12 days before implantation. It is this 12-day period that will prove to be crucial with regard to the abortive nature of contraceptives.** It should be noted that from conception to implantation, the endometrium continues to thicken. If the egg is not fertilised, or a fertilised egg does not successfully implant (due to a miscarriage or abortion), the uterus sheds its thickened lining. This is the process that occurs during the menstrual cycle (that is, the monthly period). It is sad to say that, even though we live in a time where an abundance of information is available, especially on the internet, there is so much ignorance concerning how reproduction actually works. **It is due to this ignorance that women, and men, so easily become victims of those who have an evil agenda.**



Implantation of a fertilised egg in the uterus

How do embryo-killing contraceptives work?

Information about hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs can be found in most drug reference manuals, and in the information leaflets that come in the drug packages, as well as in medical textbooks and websites.

We learn that **hormonal contraceptives** can work in three ways (mechanisms):

1. **They can stop or reduce the monthly release of an egg from the ovaries (ovulation)**, which decreases the likelihood of the fertilisation of an egg by a sperm.
2. **They thicken cervical mucus**, which makes it more difficult for sperm to travel through the cervix and into one of the fallopian tubes to reach an egg.
3. **They thin the lining of the uterus**, which decreases the likelihood of the fertilised egg (embryo) from implanting in the uterus. (The lining of the uterus of women who do not use hormonal contraceptives thickens to between 7 and 16 mm, compared to between 1.1 and 5 mm for women who do use them. Remember that a minimum of about 7 mm is needed for successful implantation.)

The first two mechanisms do prevent pregnancies. However, when these fail and fertilisation does take place, **the third mechanism causes the fertilised egg (embryo) to die because it cannot implant properly**, whereby the newly created human being, with a soul, is aborted. Unfortunately, it is not possible to know how often this happens (see p. 23).

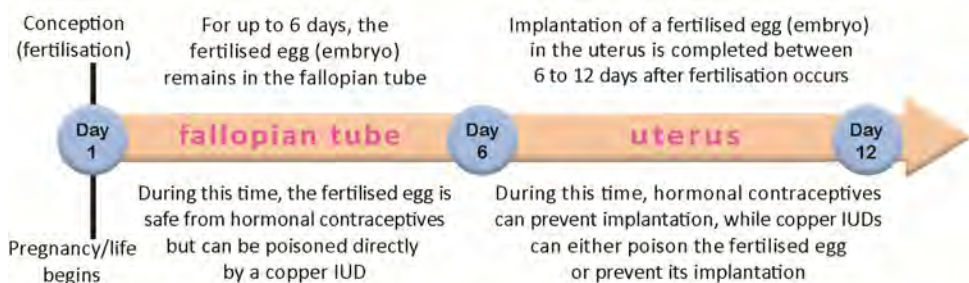
As for **copper IUDs**, they produce an inflammatory reaction, which creates a toxic environment in the woman's reproductive system. This includes organs such as the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, cervix and vagina. Copper IUDs can work in five ways (mechanisms):

1. **They can interfere with sperm movement by damaging or destroying the sperm.** (After sexual intercourse, sperm can survive in a woman's body for up to 5 days.)
2. **They can damage or destroy eggs (ova).** (After ovulation the egg only lives for 12 to 24 hours.)

3. They can kill, through poisoning, a fertilised egg (embryo) in the fallopian tubes. (A fertilised egg remains in the fallopian tube for 6 days at the most before it reaches the uterus.)
4. They can kill, through poisoning, a fertilised egg (embryo) that has entered into the uterus. (Once the fertilised egg enters the uterus, it can take a further 1 to 6 days to implant.)
5. They change the lining of the uterus so that a fertilised egg (embryo) cannot successfully implant in the uterus.

The first two mechanisms prevent pregnancies, while the result of the last three mechanisms is an abortion, that is, the killing of a human being.

The following diagram helps us understand how hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs affect the fertilised egg (embryo). In the case of hormonal contraceptives, these can cause the loss of an embryo in the uterus, and in the case of copper IUDs, this loss can happen in either the fallopian tubes or in the uterus.



Due to the change in definition of when life (pregnancy) begins, we are told that the destruction of a fertilised egg (embryo) is not an abortion as long as it happens before implantation. **The destruction of a fertilised egg can take place either in the fallopian tube or in the uterus.** However, the new definition is untrue because the fertilised egg is a human being with an eternal soul, regardless of whether or not it has attached to the uterus. Therefore, it is absolutely an abortion. **One of the world's best kept secrets is that hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs can cause abortions!**

What evidence is there that they can cause abortions?

Even though there are motives and actions taken to hide this information, **most pharmaceutical companies and the medical community in general continue to admit that hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs can prevent a fertilised egg (embryo) from implanting in the uterus and/or destroy the fertilised egg directly.** As a reminder, hormonal contraceptives do this by thinning the lining of the uterus, while copper IUDs do this by producing an inflammatory reaction, which creates a toxic environment. This toxic environment can either damage or destroy a fertilised egg, but it can also prevent its implantation.

What is the evidence regarding hormonal contraceptives?

- i) The website *Healthy Women*, known for its authoritative medical information, states the following: “Hormonal birth control using estrogen and progestin (a form of progesterone) stops the ovaries from releasing eggs and **changes the uterine lining so it won’t support a fertilized egg.**”
- ii) The popular and highly-regarded website *Verywell Mind* discusses how hormonal birth control methods work by: “**making it difficult for a fertilized egg to attach itself to the uterus by thinning the uterus lining**”



The following **four quotes** have been taken from an excellent and highly recommended book, *Does the Birth Control Pill Cause Abortions?* by Randy Alcorn (see: epm.org/static/uploads/downloads/bcpill.pdf). The author has thoroughly researched this topic, and his work is grounded firmly on medical science and scientific studies (Orthodox Christians are advised not to read his religious references). Due to the absence of research available to him, Mr. Alcorn is unfortunately open to the use of barrier contraceptives such as condoms and spermicides. Refer to Chapter 8 for this topic.

- i) “The *American Pregnancy Association* says the use of oral contraceptives ‘**changes the uterus lining to prevent implantation**’” (p. 38).



ii) “Attorney Frank Sussman, representing Missouri Abortion Clinics, argued before the Supreme Court in 1989 that ‘The most common forms of ... contraception today, IUDs and low-dose birth control pills ... **act as abortifacients** [abortion-causing medications]” (p. 37).

iii) “In her article *Abortifacient Drugs and Devices: Medical and Moral Dilemmas*, Dr. Kristine Severyn states, ‘The third effect of combined oral contraceptives is to alter the endometrium in such a way that implantation of the fertilized egg (new life) is made more difficult, if not impossible. In effect, the endometrium becomes atrophic [deteriorated] and unable to support implantation of the fertilized egg... **The alteration of the endometrium, making it hostile to implantation by the fertilized egg, provides a backup abortifacient method to prevent pregnancy**” (p. 31).

iv) “In November 2008, a prominent medical organisation with pro-abortion views, the *American Society for Reproductive Medicine* (ASRM), published a review of hormonal birth control in its medical journal.



The mechanisms of hormonal birth control* were stated as: ‘inhibition of ovulation, alteration in the cervical mucus, and/or **modification of the endometrium, thus preventing implantation**” (p. 38).

* This is referring to all six types of hormonal contraceptives.

What is the evidence regarding copper IUDs?

The following are six examples that clearly state that copper IUDs can destroy a fertilised egg (embryo) before, and even after, implantation.

i) On the *Family Planning Australia* website, we read, “The copper IUD... **changes the lining of the uterus to make it unable to support a fertilised egg.**”

ii) On the *Paragard* website, the pharmaceutical company openly admits that their copper IUDs work “by preventing the sperm from reaching and fertilizing the egg and **may also prevent implantation.**”



iii) On the *Healthdirect Australia* website, we read, “The **copper IUD works by...** making it harder for sperm to reach and fertilise an egg; making it harder for an egg to survive; **changing the lining of the uterus so that if an egg was fertilised, it wouldn’t be able to implant.**”

iv) In the textbook, *Drugs During Pregnancy and Lactation* (Third Edition), 2015, in a chapter written by Gerard H.A. Visser and Angela Kayser, we read: “**In women who use a copper IUD as a contraceptive, the copper concentration in the fallopian tubes is elevated... A number of reports suggest that pregnancy in association with copper IUDs, results in an increased rate of spontaneous abortions and preterm birth** in the group in which the IUD remained in the uterus, compared with the group in which the IUD was removed or expelled.”

v) In the journal *Contraception* (Vol. 75, Issue 6, 2007), we read that **the copper IUD can destroy an embryo while it is still in the fallopian tube** “Copper ions released from an IUD enhance the inflammatory response... decreasing the rate of fertilization and **lowering the chances of survival of any embryo that may be formed, before it reaches the uterus.**”



vi) The following is from an article titled, *The Truth about Emergency Contraception* from the highly recommended pro-life website ‘Human Life International’. It states: “Paragard is the only non-hormonal copper intrauterine device [IUD] used in the United States today. It releases copper ions that are toxic to both gametes (sperm and ovum) and decreases the probability of fertilization. **The copper ions are also toxic to the very early embryo, either killing it or preventing it from implanting.** Paragard can be inserted up to five days after intercourse to prevent a continuing pregnancy.”

How early can blood and urine tests confirm a pregnancy?



If a woman is pregnant, a home urine pregnancy test can potentially detect a pregnancy 3 to 4 days after implantation begins, which would usually be about 9 to 10 days after ovulation and fertilisation (at the very earliest).

Blood tests are a more reliable way of confirming an early pregnancy, as they are slightly more accurate and can detect pregnancy earlier, but only by a day or so. **Blood tests can potentially detect a pregnancy 2 to 3 days after implantation begins**, which would usually be about 8 to 9 days after ovulation and fertilisation (at the very earliest).

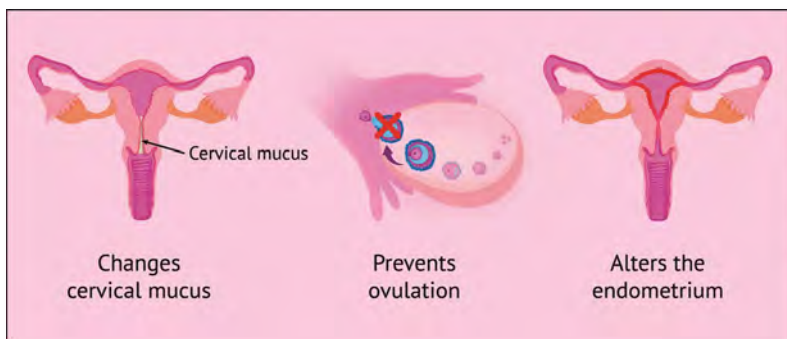
What is important to note is that for both a urine pregnancy test and a blood test, a pregnancy can only be confirmed after implantation. This is because both tests look for the hormone of pregnancy called “hCG”, a hormone that begins to rise steadily only after implantation begins. Therefore, it is impossible to know by any pregnancy test available today whether a woman has conceived before the fertilised egg (embryo) has implanted. **This would mean that a woman would be unaware that she is pregnant for at least 8 to 9 days after her child has been conceived.** On the other hand, if implantation is late, say on the 12th day after fertilisation, then a woman would be unaware that she is pregnant for 14 to 15 days.

Thus, for any woman using hormonal birth control or the copper IUD, it is impossible to know for sure whether an abortion has taken place before implantation. **Only God knows how many of these children are tragically aborted during this time, that is, the time before the implantation.** Most women are completely unaware that the contraceptives they are using destroy their fertilised eggs (embryos) before implantation. It is now clear why the definition of when life/pregnancy begins was changed.

Those who have been made to believe that there is no life before the implantation of a fertilised egg are under the impression that its destruction before implantation would not be considered an abortion. As convincing as this argument may sound to those who are ignorant, it is absolutely false to people who have a thorough understanding of the topic. Those who do have this knowledge will clearly understand that **hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs can cause abortions because they target the fertilised egg (embryo) from the time of conception to before implantation—a period of up to 12 days.**

What are the pharmaceutical companies afraid of?

Since more and more people, including medical professionals, were finding out about the abortive nature of hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs, some pharmaceutical companies had to take further steps to keep this fact a secret by either using unclear expressions or removing information about the abortive mechanism altogether. Currently, many pharmaceutical companies are using vague expressions such as “alter the endometrium”, or “changes to the endometrium”. **These expressions essentially mean the destruction of a fertilised egg (i.e., an abortion) but they are said in a manipulative way.** Below is an example of an advertisement showing how hormonal contraceptives work. The advertisement says “alters the endometrium” without directly mentioning the consequence: that this “alteration” to the endometrium (lining of the uterus) can prevent the implantation of a fertilised egg which, in fact, is an abortion.



However, these unclear expressions were not enough for some pharmaceutical companies. So, **they decided to remove this fact altogether from the patient information leaflets placed inside the packages of these types of contraceptives**. In the case of hormonal contraceptives, some inserts mention how they work by only giving two mechanisms of action: **(i)** “prevention of ovulation”, and **(ii)** “the thickening of cervical mucus”. **They leave out the third, abortive, mechanism** which would usually say something along the lines of “changes the lining of the uterus to make it unable to support a fertilised egg”.

The following is an excerpt from the informative video, *The Birth Control Pill Documentary – 28 Days on the Pill*, which illustrates how some pharmaceutical companies hide the facts from consumers: “The CPS is the Canadian drug reference for health care professionals. Almost all of the entries for oral contraceptives mention changes in the endometrium. Now, when we went to the pharmacies and got the patient information which comes in the pill packages, **the inserts that do mention how the pill works only give two mechanisms of action: prevention of ovulation, and the thickening of cervical mucus, but leaving out the effects on the endometrium...** When we looked at the American inserts, we found all three mechanisms under the clinical pharmacology section. However, in the information for the patient section, **there was no mention of how the pill works...** I think that’s part of the reason that not only so many health care professionals, but so many women, just don’t know about this issue, about this controversy.”

Here are **three examples** of how the abortive nature of copper IUDs is intentionally downplayed, disguised, deceitfully manipulated, or lied about. **The fertilised egg and its destruction are not mentioned at all.**

i) “A copper intrauterine device (IUD) prevents pregnancy by **changing the lining of your uterus** to stop sperm from reaching the egg” (nshealth.ca).

ii) “Copper also helps change the lining of your uterus and cervical mucus, which **makes it a less ideal environment for sperm**” (clevelandclinic.org).

iii) “What it comes down to is that copper creates a toxic environment for the sperm... **As the sperm nears the uterus, the copper causes it to change direction and swim away from the uterus**” (healthline.com).

~ Chapter 4 ~

Side Effects and Health Risks of Hormonal Contraceptives and Copper IUDs



The ignorance regarding hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs is tragic, not only because they cause abortions, but also because many women are suffering health issues without understanding the cause. To make matters worse, **doctors are either unaware of the side effects and health risks, or know about them but choose to downplay them or even remain silent altogether.** The justification for this silence is their belief that the benefit of these contraceptives outweighs the harmful effects on women's health—the supposed benefit being the prevention of pregnancy. In other words, serious sicknesses and death are better than being pregnant.

Pharmaceutical companies have made some side effects and health risks readily available to the public, but they mainly advertise them as “safe and effective”. **The truth is that many side effects and health risks have intentionally been concealed from the public, in particular, various neurological and psychological symptoms**—these have been bolded below for both hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs. The purpose of this chapter is to make available both the known and lesser known side effects and health risks of hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs. For more information and references regarding this chapter, please refer to our website.

What are the health risks of hormonal contraceptives?

Hormonal contraceptives increase the risk of blood clots, heart attacks, infertility, migraines and severe headaches (RCVS), deep vein thrombosis (DVT), high blood pressure, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), breast cancer, cervical cancer, liver tumors, heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, weight gain, hair loss, ectopic pregnancy, miscarriage, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), **insomnia, depression, anxiety, mood disorders, suicide, and other mental health problems.**

The following quote has been taken from the book, *Does the Birth Control Pill Cause Abortions?* by Randy Alcorn: **“In 2005 the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a branch of the World Health Organization, labeled all hormonal contraceptives as a Group One Carcinogen** [i.e. known to cause cancer] in the same class as asbestos and radium. This important warning regarding the breast cancer/birth control link has not been publicized; rather it has been concealed from the public, according to Dr. Angela Lanfranchi, a surgical oncologist and breast cancer expert. Dr. Lanfranchi compares the concealment of this health risk to the long-delayed acknowledgment of the smoking/lung cancer link” (p. 130).



Dr. Warren Hern, one of the foremost abortionists in the United States, in his textbook *Abortion Practice*, openly admits that **more than 30,000 American women have died due to direct side effects of the Pill since it was adopted in the United States in 1960**—with a current average of 600 to 700 deaths per year. He did not comment, however, on the fact that many more women have been seriously affected by the Pill than the number who have died.

The following **two quotes** have been taken from the well-researched website, *Human Life International* (hli.org):

i) “Though feminist groups and the mainstream media typically present hormonal contraceptives as a great benefit for women, they overlook the serious side effects reported in mainstream scientific literature, either through deliberate intent or negligence.”

ii) “Elizabeth Lee Vliet, MD, a women’s health specialist and the author of *It’s My Ovaries, Stupid!*, has studied the birth control pill’s negative impacts on women’s moods... She found that they ‘might even bring about the need for antidepressants: The Pill screws up a woman’s mood and libido, and then she ends up on Prozac.’... One of the most interesting studies done on the health impacts of the hormonal methods found that they may cause women to begin a relationship with the wrong men.”
[This is due to the psychological and emotional effects of hormonal contraceptives.]

What are the health risks of copper IUDs?

Copper IUDs can lead to copper overload (toxicity) in the body. They increase the risk of anemia, headaches, slowed heart rate, infertility, life-threatening infection, reproductive and sexual problems, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), uterine perforation, heavier and longer periods, hair loss, fatigue, dizziness, **anxiety, paranoia, depression, insomnia, racing thoughts, irritability, mood swings, brain fog (spaciness and confusion), numbed emotions, poor concentration and focus, increased anger and rage, irrational behaviours, personality shifts, panic attacks, and other mental health problems.**

On the website *Drugwatch*, we read: **“Some people have filed Paragard IUD lawsuits claiming the device can break upon removal, causing serious injuries.** Injuries claimed in lawsuits include surgery to remove broken pieces of the device, pain and infertility.” *[As of January 2025, there were 2,882 pending lawsuits against Paragard, and this number is growing.]*

Is there a link between copper IUDs and copper toxicity?

Pharmaceutical companies repeatedly say that their copper IUDs are safe and that there is no evidence that they cause copper toxicity. The truth of the matter is that copper IUDs can increase copper levels in women, which can lead to copper toxicity. Furthermore, hormonal contraceptives containing estrogen can also cause copper to be retained in the body which can, again, lead to copper toxicity in women. The symptoms of copper toxicity are many and serious.

This fact is confirmed by **Rick Fischer, one of Canada’s leading Hair Tissue Mineral Analysis (HTMA) practitioners, and founder of the world’s leading support site for copper toxicity (CopperToxic.com).** Mr Fischer is at the global forefront of advancing support and understanding for the widespread, yet silent, epidemic that affects so many—the epidemic being copper toxicity.



Rick Fischer

He firmly believes that copper IUDs can cause copper toxicity. He is frequently hired to teach HTMA principles and mineral-based health concepts to various health practitioners, including a large number of Functional Diagnostic Nutritionists, Functional Medicine Doctors, HTMA Practitioners, Osteopaths, Naturopaths, and more. The following **three quotes** are from Mr. Fischer:

i) “If and as the liver gets overloaded, copper will then start accumulating more in the brain... Initially, copper gives a person energy. But over time, the excess accumulation leads into **increasing fatigue and brain fog, then depression and anxiety, possible panic attacks, all the way down the spectrum to severe psychosis, paranoia, schizophrenia, and even suicide.”**

ii) “The full extent of copper IUD risks are rarely disclosed to patients. A quick visit to any number of the growing online forums filled with women struggling terribly with symptoms which suddenly developed after having a copper IUD put in are testament to this. Yet, the majority of health sites and informational brochures on the copper IUD limit their disclosure of symptoms to, more or less, the potential for heavier periods, localized discomfort and cramping, spotting, and possibly lost IUD strings. **Rarely are women informed on how copper can impact mood and, as such, they are not being provided the full disclosure they deserve in order to make a fully informed decision.”**

iii) “For the countless women who do exhibit symptoms after their IUD insertion, especially psychologically, the default position of most doctors is the insistence that there could be no possible connection to the IUD, nor that a copper IUD is going to increase the body’s copper level. **This has been told time and again to countless women struggling with symptoms that commenced upon insertion of their IUD, and yet their concerns have been repeatedly dismissed by practitioners on the basis that the copper IUD couldn’t possibly cause such symptoms and that the idea of copper toxicity is a myth.”**

~ Chapter 5 ~

What the God-Bearers Say About Abortion-Causing Substances and Devices

Saint Basil the Great (†379): “A woman who deliberately destroys an embryo is answerable for murder” (Canon 2). “...And those who give abortion-causing substances are murderers as much as those who take the embryo-killing poisons” (Canon 8).

The Fifth-Sixth Ecumenical Council at Trullo (691 AD)

The Council of Trullo, also known as the Fifth-Sixth Council, was convened by Saint Justinian II, the Pious Emperor (†711). In Canon 91 the Council decreed that both: “**Women who supply drugs for the purpose of causing abortions, and those who take embryo-killing poisons, are made subject to the penalty prescribed for murderers.**”

Metropolitan Neophytos of Morphou, Cyprus

His Eminence is known for his deep spiritual wisdom gathered from his years close to several contemporary saints. He is included here because he transmits to us what he learnt from the God-bearers. In a talk, he said:

“The morning after pill, the IUD, and certain other contraceptive methods can, in fact, cause abortions... Innocent creatures are killed,

right at the moment they are conceived...

Abortions are so numerous, especially by the

IUDs inserted in the woman’s womb, that,

according to the holy Elder, Ephraim of Arizona,

the constant state of aborting embryos produces

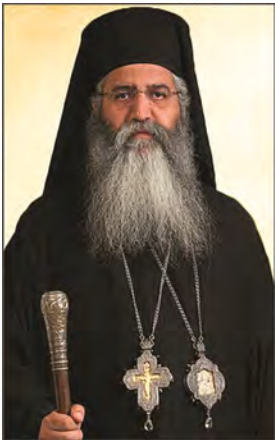
germs. If we do not take good care of our body, if

we don’t wash ourselves, we will have bodily

germs... The same goes for our soul. Our soul

produces germs too... What kind of germs?

Demonic, invisible germs...”



Archpriest Dimitry Smirnov, Russia (†2020): “The first law which God gave to man is: ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.’ A contraceptive is a drug or device that prevents the fulfilment of this commandment... **The majority of contraceptives can cause abortions and are harmful to the health of women...** Unnoticed by the woman, the children conceived within her are periodically destroyed... Intrauterine devices [IUDs] are an example of this, because they destroy fertilized eggs. This is, in fact, an abortion. And **while this device remains implanted in the uterus, a mother may unknowingly commit a whole series of abortions...** What are the effects of contraception and abortion? Well, first of all, there is a shortage of children.”



Eldress Galaktia, Crete, Greece (†2021)

Metropolitan Neophytos of Morphou said of Eldress Galaktia that she is on the same level as Saint Porphyrios, and greater than many of the Greek saints of the twentieth century. The holy Eldress said:

“The earth is bloodied by abortions, by the pills that kill children and the devices [IUDs] that women put inside themselves which kill the poor, unborn children when they are tiny seeds in their mother’s belly... Lately I feel that disasters are coming. However, I do not speak about them but only of repentance and a return to God. It seems to me, my child, that the animals will judge us for our filth. There are also abortions and blasphemies. There is not much talk about repentance from the clergy, but I do not want to judge. After turmoil comes peace. Great is the glory of Orthodoxy...”



Archimandrite Raphael (Karelin), Georgia

Archimandrite Raphael is a clergyman of the Orthodox Church of Georgia. He is one of the most outspoken clergymen on the topic of contraceptives and the fact that many of them cause abortions. The truth is that very few Orthodox clergymen in the world even know about this topic, and those who do, seldom speak out about this holocaust of the unborn. The following are Father Raphael's words:

"The pharmacists who prepare these devices, as well as practicing doctors, sometimes conceal the effects of these devices. Even the name 'birth control' is inaccurate. Not a single type of birth control can guarantee that it prevents pregnancy 100%; therefore, some of them are instead directed at attacking the embryo. **Most of these types of birth control have nothing whatsoever to do with contraception; instead, they are intended to kill the embryo directly.** As for the IUD* in particular, the same lie is present here. **The IUD does not prevent conception; it prevents the movement of a fertilized egg—what is already a living embryo...**



"We see a case of the murder of a human being with an immortal soul, but a human being whose body has not yet developed. It loses its ability to develop in the wall of the uterus, and so a few days later it dies... **In most cases birth control is actually a 'mini-abortion,' and in no essential way different from murder...**

* When Archimandrite Raphael refers to IUDs, he means both hormonal and copper IUDs. It is significant that he, the previous two God-bearers, and the Metropolitan all specifically mention IUDs. The reason for this is because the success rate of IUDs is over 99%. Only God knows how high the abortion rate of IUDs is. Note that what Archimandrite Raphael says about IUDs would also apply to the other five types of hormonal contraceptives because they can also cause abortions.

“Such types of birth control destroy far more lives than [intentional] abortions. **When using such types of birth control, a woman on average conceives several times a year; consequently, she commits several murders.*** Unfortunately, most women simply don’t understand that when they use an IUD, they become potential murderers.

“Though the Church forbids the use of such types of birth control, **some priests do not understand the way they work, and consider that if there is a sin in this situation, it is still not murder or the shedding of blood.** They may see it as a difficult reality of our modern life, something that we cannot find an alternative to. There have been cases when priests have allowed their spiritual children to use such types of birth control, and even permitted such women to commune. **During the moment of confession and communion, it is entirely possible that at that very moment, her child is dying within her womb, killed by the IUD.** Communion during the act of murder—what a horrifying contradiction of contemporary spiritual life!”



* The World Health Organization, an agency of the United Nations, states that around 73 million intentional abortions take place worldwide each year. In 2022, the United Nations released a data booklet titled “World Family Planning 2022”, which stated that among the 1.9 billion women of reproductive age (15-49 years) living in the world in 2022, around 970 million practised some type of contraception. Out of these, at least 43% use hormonal contraceptives or copper IUDs. This is around 410 million women worldwide. As there are strong campaigns to make as many women as possible use these abortion-causing contraceptives, this figure will likely grow in the years to come. Even if we use the 2022 figure of 410 million women, and assuming they had a minimum of one silent abortion per year, it would mean that at least 410 million children are aborted unknowingly yearly. This is much higher than the 73 million induced (intentional) abortions per year. The reality is that many women have multiple unknown abortions per year. This is the greatest holocaust of all time!

~ Chapter 6 ~

What the God-Bearers Say About Abortion

The God-bearers refer to abortion as murder and those who commit it as murderers. However, we will learn in Chapter 10 that if someone sincerely repents and confesses, they will not be condemned as a murderer.

Elder Ephraim of Arizona, USA (†2019): “**Abortion is the killing of innocent babies, a great evil...** this crime must stop... Millions upon millions of babies throughout the entire world have been thrown into garbage cans and septic tanks... Woe to the women who commit this crime!”

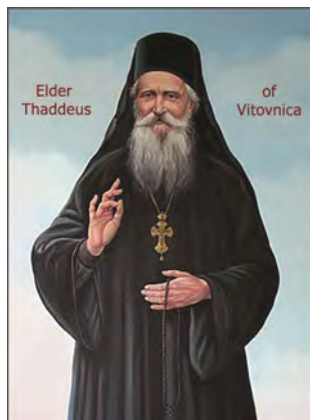
Saint Paisios the Athonite (†1994): “How many thousands of embryos are killed every day! **Abortion is a terrible sin.** It is murder, and indeed, a tremendous murder, **because unbaptised children are killed.**”

Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica, Serbia (†2003): “God gives life and a woman destroys it. Great repentance is necessary, from the depths of her soul... **Abortion is a great sin, and if a woman does not repent from the depths of her soul, she will be condemned as a murderess.**”

Elder Arsenie Papacioc, Romania (†2011): “We cannot, by any means, accept that a woman will have an abortion... **It is a grave matter for she will murder an unbaptised person.**”



Elder Ephraim



Elder Thaddeus



Elder Arsenie

Elder Philotheos Zervakos of Paros, Greece (†1980)

Soon to be canonised, Elder Philotheos was a spiritual son of Saint Nektarios of Aegina. Even though the Elder was known for his very strict stance against Orthodox couples divorcing, he advised the following:

“The husband who does not want children, who does not listen to God, but prefers to hear the devil and takes his wife and pays the doctors to do abortions, becomes a murderer, not of foreign people, but of his own children. **The wife, when she is pregnant, must not listen to her husband—she should not have an abortion** and thus become a murderess. However, if her husband forces her, she should protest, she should go to the priest, or to the Metropolitan and seek help, **and if her husband insists, she should divorce him.**”



Metropolitan Neophytos of Morphou, Cyprus

His Eminence is known for revealing the teachings of the God-bearers:

“Saint Paisios wanted to show us how terrible abortion is, whether it is happening inside the woman’s womb by using contraceptive methods, or in a hospital. When he heard about abortions he would say: **‘Have these children that you don’t want to have, bring them to me to be baptised so that they are registered as citizens of the Heavens, and then kill them.’** Do you hear that? Do you think that the Saint would want to kill a child? He wanted to show us how significant Baptism and Chrismation are.”



Saint Cleopa of Sihastria, Romania (+1998)

The renowned Saint Cleopa was an abbot, spiritual father, missionary, confessor and hesychast. His “university” was his more than eight years of complete solitude in the forests of Romania. He acquired the Holy Spirit, and as such, he was able to reveal, to all Orthodox Christians, God’s law and message of salvation in a clear and simple way. **The primary duty that he asked Christian families to fulfil was the birth and upbringing of children. Following the Holy Canons of the Church, Saint Cleopa absolutely condemned the aborting of children and the killing of embryos, one of the greatest sins a Christian could commit.** The Saint’s impact on Orthodoxy in Romania, and the entire Orthodox Church, was such that his influence continues to this day. He was recently canonised by the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Saint Cleopa was asked: **Why is abortion considered murder, and why is it condemned so strongly by the Holy Church?** His reply was:

“Abortion means the killing of babies in the womb by various means. **The embryo has a living soul, which is created by God from the very moment of conception, and that is why the Church and the Holy Fathers**



fight against abortion so strongly... The fifth commandment from the Ten Commandments is also violated, which says: ‘Thou shalt not kill’ (Exod. 20:13). Abortion threatens life on earth and violates the order of creation given by God in heaven. Abortion threatens the lives of the most innocent human beings, which are children; the family falls apart, the whole of society falls ill, and terrible divine punishments are brought upon the guilty,

both in life and after death... This is why abortion is a crime. **It is the killing of a human being and must be fought against with all the power of the Church and her clergy.”**

Archimandrite Athanasios Mitilinaios, Greece (+2006)

Archimandrite Athanasios was one of the most eminent and beloved Orthodox preachers of Greece, whose teachings can truly be considered theological and God-inspired. He said the following regarding abortion:



“The doctors claim (and both women and men believe it) that when they perform an abortion, the embryos are not human. They make the excuse: ‘But it was one month old, Father. Too small, only one month old!’ If you cause an artificial miscarriage—in other words **if you have an abortion—not only a month after conception, but even one second after conception, then you have committed murder.** Abortion is murder!”

Archpriest Dimitry Smirnov, Russia (+2020)

Father Dimitry was a well-known and beloved Moscow priest who always tried to follow the truth of God, and was not afraid to speak out. His fearless preaching was clear and sharp, exposing the various sins in society—he was a true priest. Father Dimitry was one of a few clergymen who frequently spoke out against abortion and revealed exactly how abortion-causing contraceptives work. **He printed and distributed millions of leaflets, and spoke on the radio and television against abortion and**



the use of contraceptives. Together with Elena Smirnova, a psychologist, they developed a series of questions that could help a pregnant woman who was considering abortion to refocus her thinking and make the right decision. Father Dimitry helped countless women not to have abortions, and organised adoptions for their children when necessary. He said:

“People kill their children, and they ‘protect’ themselves from them as if children were criminals, and as a result they are not happy.”

What are the consequences of abortion?

The consequences mentioned below are lessened, or may not even occur, when there is deep repentance, confession to a priest, and when Orthodox Christians demonstrate that their repentance is sincere by producing fruits worthy of repentance—see Chapter 11. **The saints can sound harsh, but their aim is to bring us to repentance and to attain salvation.**

Saint Paisios of Sihastria, Romania (+1990): “After denial of the faith, the greatest sin being committed in the world is the murder of babies by abortion. **These two sins quickly bring God’s wrath and punishment upon mankind...** The penance for abortion and murder in general is life-long repentance.”

Saint Paisios the Athonite (+1994): “If a woman has an abortion, it will be her other children who will pay the price with sicknesses and accidents. Today, parents kill children with abortions, and they do not have the blessing of God... The priests must explain to the people that the [civil] law on abortions violates the commandments of the Gospel.”

Saint Porphyrios of Kafsokalivia (+1991): “The main reason that couples divorce is that they use contraceptives so as not to have children. This is very bad, and women suffer terribly from nervous problems.”

A woman said to Saint Porphyrios, “Now I’m at the start of my pregnancy and all my friends tell me to do a prenatal examination to determine whether or not I will give birth to a retarded child or a child with some other terrible affliction.” Saint Porphyrios replied, “And afterwards what will you do, have an abortion? **If you do such a thing, never again ask for my advice because I will have nothing more to say to you.**”

Saint Gervasios Paraskevopoulos of Patras, Greece (+1964): “Much suffering will come to humanity. The cause of the sufferings that exist, and of those sufferings that are coming, and especially the blood that flows at different wars... the cause is abortion. **The embryos, that many doctors do not consider to be fully human beings, take revenge.**”

Archimandrite John Krestiankin, Russia (†2006)

Father John was known as a grace-filled elder. He was a spiritual father and confessor for many Orthodox Christians in Russia, providing religious instructions and guidance on various aspects of the Orthodox Faith and Orthodox spirituality. He taught:

i) “The Holy Fathers say that **the living children** of mothers who killed their own infants **take revenge upon their mothers for their brothers and sisters who never saw God’s light.**”

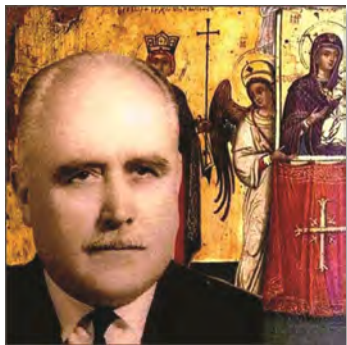
ii) “Know, that for **every child that is unborn** due to his mother’s will, each child to which she later gives birth for her own ‘joy’ **will take revenge upon her with sorrows, sicknesses and psychological oppression.**”

iii) “Abortion is a mortal sin, **the consequences of which will reflect themselves first of all upon your soul, and then upon those children whom you have already borne.**”



Dimitrios Panagopoulos, Greece (†1982)

Mr. Panagopoulos was a renowned, pious lay preacher known for his God-enlightened sermons. He brought thousands upon thousands of people to repentance and confession, and a return to Orthodox Tradition.



“A mother must not deceive herself by thinking that she achieves something good for her child by taking the child to Holy Communion, while at the same time she is burdened with adulteries, with abortions, or with other sins. **Not only does she do much harm to her child but also to herself—a child which perhaps she has had without being married.**”

What happens to children who were aborted?



Elder Ephraim of Arizona, USA (+2019): “I am not sure if you are aware of the fact that these embryos, these infants, these beings, do not cease to exist once they are aborted. On the contrary! Each embryo is a complete human being, especially with respect to the soul. These children live in the other world, and, as you can understand, **many millions of children now comprise an entire army in Heaven.**”

Saint Paisios of Sihastria, Romania (+1990):

“I believe that these infants are martyrs. They will complete the number of the martyrs in the last times, as the Apocalypse [Book of Revelation] says. In dying through abortion, they receive a baptism of blood. However, the Church does not commemorate them in her prayers so as not to encourage abortions, which is an act of infanticide [the act of killing an infant] by the parents.”



Elder Philotheos Zervakos of Paros, Greece (+1980): “There is no worse* crime than that which happens in Greece, for parents to kill 300,000 children each year before they are born. It exceeds even Communism, and all heresies and evils. Because if they had allowed their children to be born, baptised them, and then killed them with a knife, the children would have gone as Christians, and the responsibility of the parents would be less than it is now [due to abortion] where they have also killed the child’s soul. **God, of course, will compensate because in the dwellings of the Heavenly Father, there are many mansions.**”

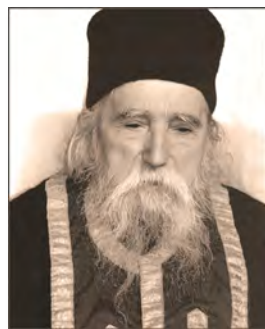


* Some saints say that abortion is the worst sin. However other saints refer to different sins as being the worst, such as heresy, sorcery & magic, and unnatural sexual acts. How do we explain this? Saints often used impactful figures of speech, in their writings or during their sermons, when they wanted to emphasise how serious certain sins are.

Saint Cleopa of Sihastria, Romania (†1998):

“A life is killed, souls are lost, both of the killed infant and of the one who commits the murder, who violates God’s commandment which says: ‘Be fruitful and multiply’ (Gen. 1:28). The fifth commandment from the Ten Commandments is also violated, which says: ‘Thou shalt not kill’ (Exod. 20:13)... **Since they were not baptised, the souls of aborted children**

cannot enter the kingdom of God.* They await the fearful day of judgment when, before the Righteous Judge, Jesus Christ, they will accuse the parents who killed them.”**



* This may sound contradictory to the previous three saints. However, Saint Cleopa is referring to what happens before the Last Judgement and Resurrection.

** This accusation will not occur if the parents have sincerely repented (see Chapter 10).

Stylianos Kemententzidis, Greece

Mr. Kemententzidis is one of the most well-respected and pious Orthodox theologians of Greece. He is known for his adherence to traditional Orthodoxy. **The following is a conclusive answer to what happens to children who were aborted or died without baptism:**

“It is a grave sin for a baby of Christian parents to die unbaptised. It must be stressed that this is the gravest sin that results from abortion. According to our Ecclesiastical Tradition, which is based on the revelations of the saints, unbaptised children, as well as the embryos which were killed by abortions or due to miscarriages, do not go to a place of rest and comfort as do the saints and the faithful who are saved. On the contrary, they go to a rather dark place, where they have neither rest nor punishment. They remain there as ‘blind’ until the Second Coming of Christ, because they were unbaptised. **However, in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the universal Resurrection of the dead, they too will be resurrected and saved, together with all the saints and those who are saved.** The unbaptised babies will receive complete and mature bodies of 33 year olds, as will all the resurrected, having as a ‘measure’ the Body of the God-man Christ’s earthly age, and made in His image.”

~ Chapter 7 ~

What the God-Bearers Say About the Avoidance of Having Children

The Orthodox God-bearers presented in Chapter 5 specifically spoke about certain contraceptives that can cause abortions and, as we saw, they absolutely condemned their use. The current chapter presents more wisdom from our Orthodox God-bearers, in this case, regarding the avoidance of childbearing. **It should be noted that the God-bearers quoted in this chapter were not aware that certain contraceptives can cause abortions. This is evident because they do not link any contraceptives to abortion.** It was commonly believed (as it is today) that all contraceptives only prevented pregnancy. Nevertheless, they still considered the use of contraceptives as sinful. If they had been aware that certain contraceptives could cause abortions, they would undoubtedly have condemned their use even more strongly.

If, in the first place, Orthodox Christians obediently listened to the God-bearers who condemned the avoidance of having children, they would not have fallen, even unintentionally, into the sin of abortion. The consequence of Orthodox Christians disregarding the God-bearers has resulted in millions of abortions due to the use of abortion-causing contraceptives.

Why, we may ask, did God not enlighten all of the God-bearers to reveal the truth about abortive contraceptives to the Orthodox faithful? This is not the fault of the God-bearers but the fault of the Christians who did not want to hear the truth. God enlightens the God-bearers according to our desire for the truth (which currently is low or non-existent). **The more we seek God's truth, the more God will enlighten the God-bearers to teach us the truth.** Nevertheless, for many centuries, all of the God-bearers condemned the avoidance of having children and contraceptives in general, regardless of whether or not they knew many of them cause abortions. **We must always listen to the God-bearers, even when we proudly think that we know better.**

Abbot Haralambos Dionysiatis, Mount Athos (+2001): “Abbot Haralambos [a disciple of Saint Joseph the Hesychast] was very strict when it came to the crime of abortion, which he considered to be cold-blooded murder against defenceless people. **He also believed avoiding having children to be a sin, and considered unworthy of Holy Communion whoever used artificial means to avoid having children.** He would say, ‘God knows how many to grant, and cares for as many as He grants.’ As for the work of P.E.F.I.P. (an association to support families with many children), he not only blessed it, but he also supported it with generous contributions.”



(Taken from: *Abbot Haralambos Dionysiatis — The Teacher of Noetic Prayer*)

Elder Athanasios of Stavrovouni Monastery, Cyprus (+2021): “The consequence of pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations, and the deadly sin of using technical means or unnatural ways of avoiding childbearing in marriage, is often the terrible and inhuman crime of abortions. However, as the Apostle Paul instructs, childbearing can be avoided if the couple both agree to refrain from sexual relations. [Apart from sexual restraint] the avoidance of having children, as we said, unfortunately often leads to abortions also.* It is a great sin and a transgression of the commandment of God. This transgression shows a lack of faith in His providence and guardianship. Whoever prevents childbearing, with cunning and evil contrivances [contraceptives], unfortunately drive away from themselves the priceless gifts of God. **By avoiding blessed childbearing, they distance the Grace of the Lord from their lives.**”



* The obsession to avoid a pregnancy leads many to use contraceptives, even when they know that they can cause serious health risks and abortions. This can be considered a form of fanaticism. Furthermore, abortion (medical and surgical) is highly likely if an accidental pregnancy were to occur. This certainly is very extreme and sinful.

Elder Athanasios continues: **“Therefore, let us not try to look elsewhere for the cause of all the painful problems that will occur in their lives, whether directly or indirectly.*** God does not say to have one or two children and to prevent the others from coming into life by a conscious choice and by unlawful means, or if they come, for you to murder them through abortions.”

* The Elder is saying that Orthodox couples should understand that the avoidance of having children will be the cause of many painful problems in their lives.

Saint Cleopa of Sihastria, Romania (+1998): “To laypeople I give a rule according to their circumstances. For those who have many children, the most important rule is to raise their children in the fear of God and to not murder them by abortion or injure them... I tell young people to preserve their purity and honour before marriage, and after marriage **to have children, as many as God gives them. I tell them to not have abortions, to not avoid childbearing by artificial means,** to have a good spiritual father they confess to, and to follow the laws of the Church regarding fasting, temperance, and frugality.”



On abortion, he said: “Perhaps, you will say, that the aborted child had not reached nine months, which means it was supposedly not a serious sin. Do not think such things, for you think a great wrong... And **whoever after this [marital] union, even if only within an hour, tries to prevent this birth in some way, the same receives great condemnation as a murderer.**”



Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos, Greece (+1989): “Married people should not only avoid contraception, but also not ‘plan’ their children. They should leave themselves with trustfulness in the hands of God and consider the coming of each child a great, godly gift... And it should not escape us even for a moment that **a parent, upon having children, becomes a co-creator with God.**”

Saint Paisios of Sihastria, Romania (†1990)

Renowned for his spiritual wisdom and discernment, Saint Paisios was one of the most beloved spiritual fathers of Romania in recent times. He was also granted by God, Divine gifts of healing and of bringing peace into the souls of people wounded by sin. Even though Saint Paisios was very kind and gentle in character, he would point out people's sins for the salvation of their souls. He was the spiritual father of the renowned Saint Cleopa. He said:



“If you avoid having children, you avoid salvation. One child is not enough, because you might lose it [that is, the child may die]. Many children in a home are usually healthier than one or two, because they often become spoiled and sickly. Here is fulfilled the word of the Lord: He which soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully (II Cor. 9:6). A little while ago an old woman came to me for confession, and I asked her: ‘Sister, how many children do you have?’ ‘Father, I’ve borne eighteen! God took eight of them when they were little, and the other ten are the foremost citizens in the village!’”

Saint Nikolai Velimirovich of Zhicha, Serbia (†1956)



Saint Nikolai, often referred to as the Serbian Chrysostom, said the following regarding the sin of abortion and childbearing: **“The Orthodox Church has condemned abortion and the avoidance of childbearing** in numerous Synods, among which of special interest is the Synod of 1937. We had better not forget the three basic purposes of marriage: The love of the spouses, childbearing, and the Christian upbringing of children.”

Metropolitan Augoustinos of Florina, Greece (†2010)

Metropolitan Augoustinos was one of the most outspoken hierarchs of the Church of Greece. Saint Iakovos of Evia (†1991) said, “Father Augoustinos Kantiotis is a holy Father of the Church!” Eldress Galaktia of Crete (†2021) said about him, “Today, the heavens shook! A great Hierarch ascended to heaven. He is now next to Saint Kosmas [the Aetolian]! The wretched ones, certain other hierarchs from the other side [hell], see him and are in torment!” **While the majority of the bishops of Greece were either silent or compromised, the Metropolitan fearlessly fought against many issues that were affecting so many Christians.** One of these was the issue of birth control and the avoidance of having children. He said:

“Are you married? You should bear children, not only one or two but as many as God gives you. **This sin is called avoidance of bearing children. For this reason, medicine, pills, and other nasty things are used.** Eventually, the worst of all, the horrible crime of abortion is committed... We have to confess that there are women with a Christian conscience who would never have abortions. A woman like that came to the Diocese House and, with tears in her eyes, told me of her pain. Her husband, as soon as he found out that she was pregnant, grabbed her and wanted to take her to a clinic to have an abortion. Because she refused, he threw her out of the house. She told him, **‘I am a Christian, and I fear God. I’m not going to become a killer. I can live without a man, but I can’t live without God. I will be full of remorse for the rest of my life, if I kill the child.’** My beloved Christians! Herod lives in our days. He grew and became a monster. Herod is said to have slaughtered 14,000 [infants]. Well, 300,000 unborn children are slaughtered through abortions every year in our homeland. The responsibility is enormous, for all of us. **Only because of this sin we have become a sinful nation, and if we don’t all repent, men and women alike, the wrath of God will come upon us. And it is coming..”**

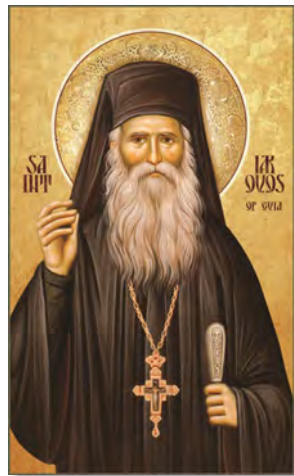


Saint Iakovos of Evia, Greece (+1991)

Saint Iakovos strictly forbade married couples to use contraceptives or to avoid having children by any other method. Instead, he encouraged them to leave the number of children they will have to God's will. Due to his prayers and encouragement, couples left it to God to decide the number of children they would have. Regarding childbearing, he taught:

“On the subject of childbearing that you are writing to me, it is right and holy because God said that people should increase and multiply. This is a commandment of God.”

The following is a wonderful example of how God takes care of those who are having difficulty raising many children. It is related by a priest whose wife asked advice from the saint. He relates: “My wife—and now presbytera [matushka]—had told Elder Iakovos about her difficulty, that is, **she could not bear to have more children because she was exhausted with the taking care of our six children.** The Elder answered her that he himself would entrust the matter to the holy Saint David [of Evia]. Indeed, since the time my wife spoke to the Elder, we did not have another child, even though we had not taken any precautions to avoid having children. But the even more amazing thing was, at one point we thought she was pregnant. In fact, we really wanted to have another child, and to even call him Iakovos. We did a pregnancy test and it was positive. We happily called Father Iakovos to announce it to him. And the Elder, watching over us even from afar, simply answered, ‘Sometimes we think it is so, but it is not.’ Indeed, there was no other pregnancy.”*



* Saint Paisios the Athonite also taught the same thing, “God has deep love and once He sees that they cannot manage, it is not difficult for Him to not give them more children,” and, “As soon as He sees that we can’t take it anymore, He will stop the children.” (See the following pages, 48 and 51.)

Why should couples leave the issue of childbearing in the hands of God?

Saint Paisios the Athonite (†1994)

From *Saint Paisios of Mount Athos, Spiritual Counsels IV, Family Life*

“Couples often express their worries on the topic of childbearing and ask my opinion. Some couples want to have one or two children, and some want many children. That which would be to their benefit, however, would be to leave the issue of childbearing in the hands of God. **They should entrust their lives to Divine Providence and not put in place their own plan. They should believe that God, Who takes care of the birds of the Heavens, will much more take care of their children.**

“Some think they should take care of everything else and then have children. They do not take God into account. Others say life is difficult nowadays and therefore, one child is enough because it is difficult to raise even one child, and so they do not have other children. They do not understand how much they sin with this perception because they do not place themselves in the trust of God. **God has deep love and once He sees that they cannot manage, it is not difficult for Him to not give them more children.**

“Many begin their married lives without thinking that their goal should be to have children and to raise them in a Christian way. **They do not want many children because they do not want the headaches, and they have in their dwellings dogs, cats...**

“Nowadays, the family is something meaningless for a lot of people who lead a secular life. This is why they either don’t get married or, if they do get married, they don’t have any children, or they kill the children through abortions, thus wiping out their whole kin [family and relatives]. It is they themselves, and not God, who wipe out their kin.

“However, the faithful who keep the commandments of God receive Divine Grace, because God is somehow obligated to help them through the difficult years in which we live. And we see Christian families all around us with as many children as God has given them, raising them with the fear of God in their hearts. **And all the children are well-balanced, joyful, a blessing from God, and they progress in life...** Couples should always be ready to accept the will of God in their life. **Whoever entrusts his life to God, God will not abandon...**”



Note: These three great saints of 20th century Greece, (from left to right) Saint Iakovos of Evia, Saint Paisios the Athonite, and Saint Porphyrios of Kafsokalivia, taught (as do all the God-bearers of the Orthodox Church) that married couples should not use contraceptives, and to leave the number of children they will have to God’s will. They considered it a sin for couples to believe that they know better than God regarding how many children they should have. We will find that there are no Orthodox God-bearers who teach anything different to this. It must be emphasised that there is total agreement (consensus) among the Orthodox God-bearers regarding contraceptives and childbearing.

What did Saint Paisios the Athonite teach about having children and the use of contraceptives?

The following is taken from the book *Vessel of Choice* by Hieromonk Christodoulou the Athonite. Hieromonk Christodoulou relays Saint Paisios' advice on the matters of having children and contraceptives.

“Too many couples were preoccupied with the problem of children. Some had a problem and could not have children and considered adopting a stranger's child, others thought about having one, at most two, children and then took precautions* not to have any more, while others set their goal to have many children.

“When the Elder was asked for advice on this issue, he emphasised that they must have absolute trust in God's providence and not to use a human plan, because children are given by God. He is the only one who knows if He will give, when He will give, and how many children He will give. No one else.

“The Elder said that some make excuses that because life has become difficult, they can barely raise a child without many difficulties, therefore they guard against having another child. But this is a great sin, because in this way they show that they themselves arrange things better than God. They are proud and underestimate God's all-wise providence.

“God sees both their mental and financial states, and many other things which we neither see nor know exist [within a family]. So, if the family's finances are insufficient and barely enough to support a child, the solution is not to be afraid of having more children and avoid them [using contraceptives]. This would resist the will of God. Instead, believe that if our good God wants to give another, or even more children into the world, He Who 'knows the things you have need of before you ask Him' will also take care of strengthening your finances.

“Elder Paisios always advised: ‘God is the One who should determine the number of children in a family. **God is not undiscerning and evil. As soon as He sees that we can’t take it anymore, He will stop the children.**’

“Once there was a father with seven children who was barely making ends meet. But in spite of all this he did not give up. He took no precautions [contraceptives] so as to avoid having more children. ‘I’ll leave it to God,’ he said. Since then, although he was young, he did not have another child. Some who were in a hurry to have a child, **the Elder advised not to look at what the world says, but to let God give them the child, at the right time that only He knows.**

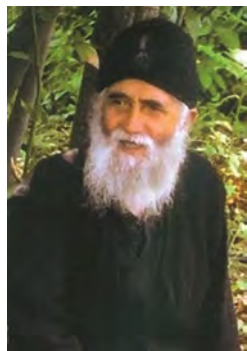
“So he advised spouses to leave themselves completely in God’s hands and not be the ones who, with their own will, prevent or regulate His will—to let **God act according to His good will and His omniscience [infinite knowledge], for thus His Grace and Blessing will dwell in their souls and cover their families.**”

* When Saint Paisios, and many other God-bearers, said that couples took precautions not to have any more children, they were referring to all types of contraceptive methods. However, not all the God-bearers were aware that many contraceptives can cause abortions. We can only imagine what they would have said if they knew that certain contraceptives cause abortions.



Why does God especially love and provide for large families?

Saint Paisios the Athonite (+1994): “God especially loves and provides for large families. A large family provides children with many opportunities to grow up normally, as long as the parents give them the proper nurturing. One child helps the other. The oldest girl helps the mother; the second child takes care of the younger one, and so forth. There is a sense of giving and they live in an atmosphere of sacrifice and love. The younger ones love and respect the older ones; and this is something that comes naturally in a large family.



“That’s why parents who have only one or two children must be very careful about how they raise them. Usually they try to provide them with everything; therefore, the children believe everything is theirs. This kind of abundance is detrimental to the child’s proper upbringing...

“Also, the parents of large families tend to have a generous heart. I remember, during the time of the German Occupation of Greece, there was an orphaned child in our neighbourhood who was completely alone in the world. One poor family man with ten children of his own felt sorry for the orphan, took him home and raised him together with his own children. Now imagine what blessings he received from God! Would God ever leave a man like that, with such great *philotimo*,* to go unassisted? **Of course, a man with a large family may in the beginning encounter difficulties, but God will not abandon him.** Let me tell you about a family: There was a man with six children who asked me to pray that the landlord would not ever ask them to leave the house they were renting. Unfortunately, there are many landlords who gladly rent their homes to families with two people and a dozen dogs and cats, but refuse to rent to large families because they fear the children will destroy the house.

* Although there is no word in English that is close to the word ‘*philotimo*’, it generally means a sense of honour, warmth of heart, love, and a reverent distribution of goodness.

“Anyway, this poor family man had grown tired of being asked to leave one house after another; of being refused housing; of having to move from one house to another carrying around his children and his whole household. He worked hard to earn a living and provide for his family, and he gladly paid the rent without complaint, as long as they let him stay a few years to avoid the frequent moves. I felt pain for him when I heard his story and I told him: **‘Do not worry; God has written your children on His account** [that is, God will take care of them]. He is the Creator who gives children the most important thing, their soul, while you and your wife, as co-creators, give them their bodies. So, you see, **God is more concerned about your children than you are.**’

“Two or three months later he returned, very happy, and said, ‘Glory be to God! He has provided a home for us, and I even have money to spare!’ I asked him what had happened, and he explained: ‘While I was waiting at the station for the bus to go to my village, I was approached by a man selling lottery tickets. Now, being a Christian, as a rule I don’t buy lottery tickets; so I told him that I didn’t want any. But when I saw him leaving, it occurred to me that he may be in great need. So I called him back, took out some money and paid for one ticket but without taking it. He, being an honourable man, wouldn’t accept this.

“Again I was troubled, and because I wanted to help him, I said to him, ‘All right, give me one ticket; maybe I’ll need it.’ So I bought one ticket, thinking that this may upset me a little for breaking my rule, but it will make him happy. That one lottery ticket won a large sum of money. I bought a home and even had money left over to raise my children.

“Then, I found out where the lottery salesman lived and I went and placed in his mailbox an envelope with a large amount of money, knowing full well that he would not take it from me in person.’ **It is amazing how the love of God works for those who have philotimo!”**

~ Chapter 8 ~

Barrier and Natural Birth Control Methods

Many Orthodox Christians ask whether or not it is permitted to use **barrier contraceptives or natural birth control methods in order to avoid pregnancy**. Perhaps the question should be: Is the avoidance of having children permitted in the first place? As we learnt earlier, all of the God-bearers are in agreement on this topic—married couples should not use contraceptives or avoid having children in any way. Instead, they should leave the number of children they will have to God's will. Unfortunately, there are those who, for various reasons, do not want to follow this advice. Some will use hormonal contraceptives or copper IUDs while others will turn to barrier contraceptives and natural methods. **Then there are those who know that hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs can cause abortions and/or side effects and health risks, and as such they turn to barrier contraceptives and natural methods believing (as do some clergy) that these are permitted because they do not cause abortions/miscarriages.** We are therefore compelled to address this important issue.

1. Barrier contraceptives include male and female condoms, diaphragms, cervical caps, contraceptive gels, contraceptive sponges, and spermicides (foams, creams, and vaginal suppositories). **These contraceptives act as barriers to try and stop sperm from reaching the egg.** Even though there are often sperm-harming chemicals involved, many firmly believe that barrier contraceptives do not cause abortions/miscarriages, nor any harm to the embryo. But how true is this?

2. Natural birth control methods, on the other hand, do not use any drugs or devices and therefore it can be certain that **these methods do not cause abortion/miscarriage nor any physical harm to the embryo if the method failed and a child was conceived.** (However, do they cause spiritual harm to the embryo and to the parents? The answer is, yes, they do cause spiritual harm.) Here we will examine what exactly natural birth control methods are. According to medical literature, there are two natural birth control methods:

i) Natural family planning (NFP), also called fertility awareness methods (FAMs), is when women check and record their signs of fertility to work out when they are more likely to get pregnant, so that they can avoid normal sexual relations during that time. There are many specific types: the Standard Days method, the basal body temperature (BBT) method, the rhythm method, and the Billings method, among others.

ii) The withdrawal method, also called the pull-out method.

Are there any concerns regarding barrier contraceptives?

Let us examine barrier contraceptives more closely to see whether or not they are associated with any side effects and health risks for those who use them. We will also examine whether or not there is any possibility that they can cause physical harm to an embryo in either the early or later stages of its development.

1. There is evidence that barrier contraceptives are associated with side effects and health risks for those who use them. Orthodox Christians (including clergymen) who believe that barrier contraceptives are safe to be used for birth control should take note of the following shocking facts:

i) Depending on the type used, some side effects and health risks of barrier contraceptives include allergies, irritation, urinary tract infections (UTIs), inflammation of the cervix, toxic shock syndrome in females, and an increased risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

ii) In the British news service ‘The Guardian’, in their article of 28 July 2024 titled, *Some condom and lubricant brands contain alarming levels of PFAS–study*, we learn that a recent environmental study found that many condoms and some lubricants contain chemicals (PFAS) linked to low birth weight, reduced sperm counts, infertility, and a shorter duration of breastfeeding. The presence of these chemicals in very sensitive areas of the body is a great cause for concern for both men and women who use them. We read, “It is chemically certain that the female reproductive tract will be contaminated by some of the chemicals in condoms.”

The article also says, “PFAS are a class of about 15,000 chemicals often used to make products resistant to water, stains and heat. **They are called “forever chemicals” because they do not naturally break down**, and are linked to cancer, liver problems, thyroid issues, birth defects, kidney disease, decreased immunity and other serious health problems.”

Even though the majority of what is written here relates to serious health problems for men and women who use condoms and lubricants containing PFAS and nonoxynol-9 (N-9), there are two references to the effect on babies: **low birth weight and birth defects** (see underlines above). Do other barrier methods have any effect on unborn babies?



2. There is evidence that barrier contraceptives used with spermicides are associated with birth defects and even miscarriages. Spermicides are chemicals that damage or kill sperm in the female reproductive tract to prevent pregnancy. Spermicide comes in many different forms: creams, gels, films, foams, and vaginal suppositories. The medical world recommends that spermicides be used together with a condom, a cervical cap, or a diaphragm. Contraceptive sponges and some condoms already come with spermicide included. **To date, all modern spermicides contain nonoxynol-9, which can irritate sensitive genital tissues.** The breakdown of the protective skin layers and the ongoing irritation caused by spermicides increases the risk of HIV infection and other STIs, because it gives infections an easier pathway into the body. **In fact, the World Health Organization no longer recommends spermicides containing nonoxynol-9 due to increased risks of HIV transmission with frequent use.** Even though they are not recommended for frequent use, they are nevertheless still being used often by many people around the world.

The following **three scientific studies** examine whether there is any danger to the embryo when women continue to use spermicides without knowing that they are pregnant. **The evidence below demonstrates that spermicides are, indeed, dangerous to the embryo during its development, even to the point of causing miscarriages:**

i) In the article, *Effects of Vaginal Spermicides on Pregnancy Outcome* from the journal 'Family Planning Perspectives', (Vol. 15, No. 5, 1983), we read: **"Women who used spermicides after conception were found to have approximately double the rate of fetal loss [miscarriage] experienced by former users, including those who had used spermicides close to the time of conception."**

ii) In the article, *Vaginal spermicides and miscarriage seen primarily in the emergency room* from the journal 'Teratogenesis, Carcinogenesis, and Mutagenesis', (Vol. 2, Issue 2, 1982), we read: **"Among 813 women who had obtained a vaginal spermicide within 48 weeks of the estimated date of fertilization, 47 (5.8%) had an early miscarriage."**

iii) In the article, *The association between use of spermicides or male condoms and major structural birth defects* from the journal 'Contraception', (Vol. 80, Issue 5, 2009), it was shown that there was an "increased occurrence of perimembranous ventricular septal defects [VSD] among spermicide users". **Specifically, women who used spermicide for the first 3 months following conception were found to have an increased risk of this birth defect in their babies.** Separately, they also looked at whether there was an association between birth defects and condoms (without spermicide). The conclusion was, "There was no significant association between maternal use of male condoms during the first 3 months following conception and any of 32 types of birth defects."

The above conclusion contradicts the more recent study (2024) mentioned on page 55, which found that condoms containing PFAS are linked to low birth weight and birth defects (not just one birth defect—VSD).

Are we being lied to again?

Even though the above scientific studies raised concerns about spermicides, condoms, and lubricants other studies cast heavy doubt on these concerns by stating that the evidence is either untrue, unimportant, or irrelevant. Their conclusion is that spermicides and condoms are “safe and effective”.

One is left to wonder which studies are correct. We have already learnt that many in the medical community have gone to great lengths to change the definition of when life begins, and to suppress information that certain contraceptives can cause abortion/miscarriage, birth defects, serious side effects, and health risks. **So, are they telling the truth when they say that spermicides and condoms are “safe and effective”?**

What are some examples of hiding the truth from the public?

Unfortunately, we have seen time and again that **major medical organisations and pharmaceutical companies have failed to publicly acknowledge that certain medications were causing serious side effects and even death.** To them, just about all their medications are “safe and effective”. Shocking examples of their attempted cover-ups are:

- i)** the 1950's **thalidomide** medication used for treating nausea and morning sickness
- ii)** the 1990's “**fen-phen**” diet medicine
- iii)** the 2000's **Vioxx** anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving pill
- iv)** the recent **COVID-19** vaccine.

These are just a few of many horror stories that can be researched by anyone who sincerely wants to know the truth.



How can STI's affect the embryo during pregnancy?

As we have seen, spermicides can have very devastating effects, and can cause irritation and damage to sensitive genital tissues. **All other barrier contraceptives can also cause the same type of irritation and damage.** This breakdown of the protective skin layers and the ongoing irritation caused by the frequent use of barrier contraceptives can increase the risk of contracting and spreading infections, particularly many types of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). It is well established that **women who have an STI during pregnancy have an increased risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, preterm delivery, and other maternal and fetal complications** (hli.org).

A summary: What effects do these products have on embryos?

- i) Condoms and lubricants** containing high levels of PFAS can cause low birth weight and a variety of birth defects in babies.
- ii) Spermicides** all contain nonoxynol-9, which increases the rate of miscarriage and can increase the risk of birth defects in babies.
- iii) Other barrier contraceptives without spermicides** are associated with an increased risk of STIs in those who use them frequently. A pregnant woman with an STI has an increased risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, preterm delivery, and other fetal complications.

Can someone who is pro-life use barrier contraceptives?

With the information presented, we see that there is sufficient reason for Orthodox Christians (or anyone who is pro-life) to be alarmed and very concerned about the use of spermicides, condoms, other barrier contraceptives, and even lubricants. All of these are linked to serious side effects and health risks to both men and women. Furthermore, and more importantly, many barrier contraceptives can pose a serious risk to an innocent and vulnerable child developing in the womb—they can be born with birth defects or, depending on the product, can even die. Knowing all this, can anyone, in good conscience, use these products? **All bishops and priests seriously need to address the issues surrounding barrier contraceptives and lubricants, as well as hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs with their flocks. Silence regarding this matter needs to stop.**

How serious is the use of natural birth control methods?

Any contraceptives that can cause abortion, miscarriage, or birth defects are more serious than natural birth control methods. The following five sins vary in the degree of seriousness, and therefore the degree of guilt.

i) Those who intentionally terminate their pregnancy are guilty of the serious sin of abortion. Also guilty of the sin of abortion are those who use contraceptives, knowing that they can terminate a pregnancy. Regardless of whether they know if an abortion took place or not, the intention was there, and this is what God looks at. In Matthew 5:28, we read: “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” This means that we will all give account, not only for our actual sins, but also for our intention to sin

ii) Those who use contraceptives not knowing that they can cause abortion, are still guilty of the sin of abortion, but to a lesser extent because the sin was committed unintentionally. In the night prayers, we ask God to forgive us our sins, both known and unknown. Even if we commit sins in ignorance, we are still guilty of those sins. In Luke 12:47-48, we read that someone who knows God’s will but does not do it, will be punished severely, while those who did not know the will of God, will still be punished, but to a lesser extent.

iii) Those whose babies were born with birth defects due to contraceptives, knowing that the contraceptives they were using have this potential, are guilty of negligently causing harm to their babies. Is it right to only disapprove of women smoking, consuming alcohol and caffeine, or using drugs while pregnant? Isn’t the use of contraceptives also serious?

iv) Those whose babies were born with birth defects, not knowing that the contraceptives they were using have this potential, are guilty of unintentionally causing harm to their babies (see point ii above).

v) Those who use natural birth control methods are guilty of lacking faith in God’s will (providence), according to the God-bearers. We will soon see that this sin can lead to other very serious sins.

In the year 2000, the Jubilee Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church adopted the document titled *Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church*. It explains the difference between abortive and non-abortive contraception:

"XII. 3. Among the problems which need a religious and moral assessment is that of contraception. Some contraceptives have an abortive effect, interrupting artificially the life of the embryo in the very first stages of his life. Therefore, the same judgements are applicable to the use of them as to abortion. But other means, which do not involve interrupting an already conceived life, cannot be equated with abortion in the least. In defining their attitude to the non-abortive contraceptives, Christian spouses should remember that human reproduction is one of the principal purposes of the divinely established marital union (see, X.4). The deliberate refusal of childbirth on egoistic grounds devalues marriage and is a definite sin."

This document was written around 25 years ago. It says very clearly that the avoidance of having children is "a definite sin", which is in accordance with the teachings of the God-bearers. The document also states that there are some contraceptives that do not cause abortion because they do not destroy a fertilised egg. This is true when it comes to natural birth control. However, **this document does not clarify which contraceptives do or do not cause abortions, that is, which contraceptives destroy a fertilised egg and which ones do not.** Perhaps due to the work of Archpriest Dimitry Smirnov, the document is referring to hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs as the abortion-causing contraceptives. As for non-abortive contraceptives, the document may be referring to barrier contraceptives. However, as we just learnt, many barrier contraceptives can indeed cause abortions and miscarriages. These are spermicides, other barrier contraceptives containing spermicides, and those associated with an increased risk in STIs. None of this is mentioned in the document. **Considering the undoubted evidence now available, all Orthodox synods have a God-given duty to enlighten their flocks in a clear and precise way, regarding the truth about abortion-causing contraceptives.**

~ Chapter 9 ~

Contraceptives are Responsible for Serious Sexual Sins and an Increase in Intentional Abortions

Can natural family planning lead to more serious sins?

Whether couples are practising fertility awareness or the withdrawal method, they are guilty of not trusting the All-knowing God, Who knows how many children to give them. However, the avoidance of having children can also lead to worse sins because, as the holy Elder Athanasios of Stavrovouni Monastery, Cyprus (+2021) says, along with all the God-bearers, **“By avoiding blessed childbearing, they [couples] distance the Grace of the Lord from their lives.”** We know that without



Elder Athanasios

God's grace, it is impossible to resist sin. **Without the grace of God, how can we resist the temptation to fall into worse sins?**

It follows therefore, that couples who sin by not trusting in God's will, due to their use of natural birth control, can be tempted to commit greater sins. In the case of fertility awareness, it can seem that during fertile times, couples are not engaging in any sexual activity at all because they desperately and stubbornly do not want a pregnancy to occur. **The truth is that many couples do not engage in normal sexual relations during fertile times, but instead engage in unnatural sexual relations which do not result in pregnancies, that is, oral and anal sex.*** The Orthodox Church refers to these sins as the sins of sodomy. This is also the legal definition of sodomy (until recently sodomy was illegal in many countries, even between married couples). Those who practise the withdrawal method may also be tempted to commit these serious sins because they, too, desperately and stubbornly desire not to conceive a child.

* Natural birth control methods can have a high failure rate. Couples may be tempted to fall into these sins as a guaranteed way of preventing a pregnancy.

The sins of oral and anal sex are unnatural acts that are strictly forbidden by the Orthodox Church. According to the Canons of Saint John the Faster, **the sins of sodomy committed by Orthodox married couples are considered so serious that the penances for these sins are greater than many other serious sins, including fornication, homosexuality, adultery, sorcery or magic, murder, and abortion.** The penances, especially for serious sins, consist of very strict fasting, many prostrations, almsgiving, and abstaining from Holy Communion for several years. These Canons can be found in the *Exomologetarion: A Manual of Confession* by Saint Nikodemos the Hagiorite. Even though these Canons are not strictly kept today due to the spiritual decline of the faithful, it would be beneficial to present the penances for the abovementioned sins so that the faithful can understand their level of seriousness. **The Holy Canons that are accepted by the whole Orthodox Church, were inspired by God and are not man-made, as some blasphemously say.**

Fornication: CANON 12—“We instruct every monk or layman that has committed fornication not to commune for **2 years...**”

Homosexuality: CANON 18—“It has seemed best to exclude the man who has madly fallen upon another man from Communion for **3 years...**”

Adultery: CANON 13—“We think it good that an adulterer partake of Communion after **3 years...**”

Sorcery or Magic: CANON 32—penanced for **3 years** for sorcery or magic.

Murder: CANON 20—**5 years** for murder and **3 years** for involuntary murder.

Abortion: CANON 21—“We have designated that women who make it their practice to destroy embryos, and those who give or take poisons so as to abort and prematurely miscarry babies, are to be penanced up to **5 years, or for the most part, 3 years.**”

Sodomy: PENANCE 17, Kanonikon of the Faster—“If someone commits sodomy upon his wife, he is penanced for **8 years***...”

* This is because the union of a man and woman in marriage is holy. “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” (See Eph. 5:21–33.)

Unfortunately, many Orthodox Christians fall into these unnatural sins out of ignorance because most of the clergy are silent, and society continually promotes the sins of sodomy as perfectly natural, acceptable, and even healthy. However, the truth is that they are unnatural, unacceptable, unhealthy, and spiritually damaging. Those who have committed these sins should not fall into despair because God is merciful and forgiving as long as there is repentance and confession (see Chapter 10).

How does contraception create a pro-abortion mentality?

It is difficult to comprehend the fact that all types of contraceptive methods do not lead to a decrease in the number of abortions, but rather to an increase. **Many blindly believe that using contraceptive methods is a guaranteed way of preventing pregnancy.** Because of this blind trust, women who become pregnant while using them, often resort to abortion. This creates a pro-abortion mentality. **Unplanned and unwanted pregnancies are often due to the misunderstanding of information regarding the failure rates of contraceptives.** Many do not understand the terms “perfect use” and “typical use” which are often mentioned in information regarding contraceptive methods. What do these terms mean?

Perfect use means how well the contraceptive method works when it is being tested in a clinical trial by healthy people who are following the instructions perfectly, every time they use the method for a whole year.

Typical use (real life) means how well the contraceptive method works to prevent pregnancy when real people in real life use it. This includes both the smaller percentage of people who use it correctly and the majority that use it inconsistently and incorrectly.

It is important to understand that the typical use figures are the ones that tell the real story, so they are the figures to use when investigating the pregnancy rates of contraceptive methods. Here are some examples. The perfect-use pregnancy rate of **fertility awareness methods** is 1–5 pregnancies out of 100 couples over 1 year. But the typical-use rate is around 24 pregnancies out of 100. In the case of the **withdrawal method**, the perfect-use rate is 4 pregnancies out of 100. But the typical-use rate is around 22 pregnancies out of 100.

Many other contraceptive methods have a significant difference when it comes to perfect-use and typical-use pregnancy rates. Unfortunately, many of these failures end up in abortion.

All contraceptives in general lead to an increase in abortions. Below we present some extracts from the excellent booklet, *How Contraception Built the Abortion Culture*, produced by Human Life International (hli.org/ebooks/contraception-abortion-e-book.pdf). The following blue sub-headings are from the booklet.

Isn't contraception supposed to reduce abortions?

"Before the 1960s, sexually active people understood that intercourse often leads to pregnancy. The pill changed that mindset. Because contraception was suddenly perceived as 'reliable,' the link between sex and pregnancy was broken in the public mind. People made more promiscuous* choices, expecting no consequences.

"The large-scale use of contraceptives and abortifacients leads to a tremendously increased rate of sexual activity, which, combined with [contraceptive] method and user failures, leads to a huge increase in the number of 'unplanned pregnancies.' Up until the early 1980s, the most famous pro-abortion leaders admitted that an increase in contraceptive availability inevitably leads to an increase in promiscuity and therefore abortions.

"Both of the co-inventors of the birth control pill have confessed that a greater use of contraceptives has led to greater promiscuity and carelessness, which inevitably leads to more abortions.

"Famous 'sexologist,' Alfred Kinsey, admitted, 'We have found the highest frequency of induced abortion in the group which, in general, most frequently uses contraceptives.'

"Malcolm Potts, former Medical Director of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), acknowledged the contraception-abortion link in 1981 when he said, 'As people turn to contraception, there will be a rise, not a fall, in the abortion rate.'"

* Promiscuous: having lots of different sexual partners or sexual relationships.

Contraceptive Failure and Unplanned Pregnancy

“There are more than two million contraceptive failures in the United States annually, half of which end in [intentional] abortion. Contraception is failure-prone, but people place too much confidence in it because it is advertised as being reliable. More than half of all women currently obtaining abortions were using contraception when they got pregnant

“Once a couple starts using contraception, they make lifestyle changes and commitments that do not allow room for children. When contraception fails and they become pregnant, their ‘life plan’ wins out over their child. Since their contraceptive method has failed them, they feel cheated and therefore ‘entitled’ to an abortion—using one method of medical technology to cover up for the failure of another. The typical user (‘real life’) effectiveness rates of birth control pills, the IUDs, injectables, and insertables as a group average at about 96-98%, and the typical user (‘real life’) effectiveness rates for male and female condoms, cervical caps, diaphragm, and sponge as a group average only about 80%.”

Probability of Becoming Pregnant on the Pill

“The perfect-use effectiveness of the Pill is 99.7% per year. This percentage is extremely high, but it refers to the efficiency of the Pill when a woman is in excellent health and uses the Pill without error. When user error and illness are factored in, the result is the typical (‘real life’) user effectiveness rate. In the case of the Pill, this is only 91% per year. This means that 9 out of 100 women on the Pill will become pregnant in any given year of use. The 91% typical use (‘real life’) effectiveness rate for the Pill still sounds high until we calculate the probability of a woman becoming pregnant over an extended period of time when using it.”

**In the first year 9 out of 100 women will become pregnant while on the pill.
In three years 25 out of 100 women will become pregnant while on the pill.
In five years 38 out of 100 women will become pregnant while on the pill.
In ten years 61 out of 100 women will become pregnant while on the pill.**

“If a sexually active girl of 15 starts using the Pill continuously, there is a nearly 50% chance that she will become pregnant by the time she is 22!”

Sex-Ed is Part of the Problem

“Many people assume that better sexual education will reduce abortion rates. After all, those who are better informed should be better able to avoid unwanted pregnancies. In practice, however, this isn’t really the case. **‘Sex educators’, tell young people that they can avoid pregnancy by using contraception.** School-based clinics then facilitate promiscuous sex by distributing contraceptives and abortifacients to teenagers without parental consent or knowledge. **This perpetuates the ‘contraceptive mentality’ that creates demand for abortion.** It sometimes does appear that sex-ed within schools is linked with lower birth rates, but that’s not the whole picture. **Pregnancies increase and the problem is masked by a higher abortion rate.** Studies have shown that increased access to contraceptives may decrease teen pregnancies in the short run. But it leads to large increases later on when contraception leads to changes in sexual behavior.”

Abortifacients that Attack an Implanted Child

“The second type of abortifacient directly kills an existing preborn child. Also referred to as **‘medical abortion,’** these include:

- **RU-486** (the ‘abortion pill’)
- The **methotrexate/misoprostol** combination
- **‘Emergency contraception’:** These abortifacients have many forms and are sometimes called **‘morning-after pills.’** They consist of high doses of the artificial steroids used in oral contraceptives. The most popular brand is **Plan B.**

Conclusion

“In the United States, contraception paved the way for abortion culturally and legally. The same pattern can be observed in countries all over the world. Far from being an easy solution to abortion, contraception is one of its main causes, and pro-lifers should never support it. **As long as contraception is widely available and the underlying anti-life mentality reigns, the practice of abortion will never end.** A truly pro-life culture is pro-chastity, pro-marriage, and pro-family.”

~ Chapter 10 ~

Lifelong Repentance, Tears, and God's Love, Mercy, and Forgiveness

If anyone involved with abortions sincerely repents, they will not be condemned as a murderer. This is confirmed by the holy God-bearers:

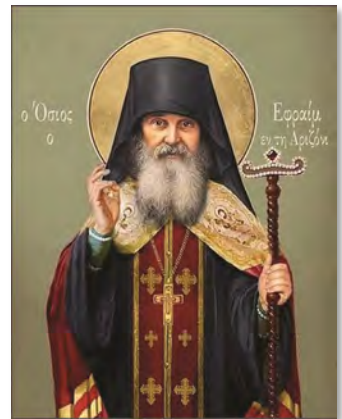
Saint Paisios of Sihastria, Romania (†1990): “The penance for abortion and murder in general is life-long repentance.”

Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica, Serbia (†2003): “Great repentance is necessary, from the depths of her soul... Abortion is a great sin, and **if a woman does not repent from the depths of her soul, she will be condemned as a murderess...** True and sincere repentance is required for such a sin, and it must never be repeated again.”

Elder Ephraim of Arizona, USA (†2019):

The following is taken from Homily 9 of the God-enlightened book, *The Art of Salvation* by Elder Ephraim of Arizona. This book is highly recommended and should be purchased by all Orthodox Christians. The Elder, in a most loving way, gives much hope to women who have committed abortion. In fact, what Elder Ephraim writes here about repentance can apply to anyone who has been involved with abortion, whether directly or indirectly, or with any other serious sin. The holy Elder writes:

“The main contributing factor, however, is the devil, who supplies various unsupported reasons, excuses, pretenses, and weaknesses, such as: ‘there is not enough money ... my husband is pressuring me ... my health is compromised ...’ and so forth. **The devil takes advantage of all these factors and craftily persuades mothers to commit this grave sin...**



Already considered a saint by many, Elder Ephraim is soon to be canonised.

"All of them [aborted babies] protest. Their innocent blood cries out to God that they were killed unjustly, that they did not receive Holy Baptism, that they did not become Orthodox Christians. Who is responsible for this? It is self-explanatory and does not have to be spelled out. When this blood is spilled, God's computer documents the crime. How will this blood be washed away? When someone becomes dirty, how is he cleansed? Only with clean water. Likewise, water is needed in this case as well. It must flow forth continuously from two faucets [taps], which are the two eyes. Internal repentance should be externalized with a lifelong, never-ending stream of tears.

"The sin, of course, is forgiven from the moment it is set forth before the sacred and all-powerful Mystery of Confession, where nothing remains unforgiven. God is love, and 'he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him' (1 Jn. 4:16). However, He is also righteous (Ps. 10:7; 88:15). For this reason, women who have had abortions should not feel at ease by virtue of the fact they confessed this sin. They must pour forth tears of repentance throughout the remainder of their life. Many of these women do not feel at peace even though they have confessed. Why? Because they still have not repented internally, they have not shed the appropriate amount of tears required to wash away the blood of the abortion or abortions. Repentance is indeed vast and endless. Our very existence and the fact that man is permitted to continue living after committing such a crime is proof of God's steadfast love and compassion. Man is still alive: this means that God is waiting for him. Since He is waiting, man must not remain indifferent but take advantage of the opportunity.



*Elder Ephraim of Arizona
wearing an epitachelion
during confession*

“The penance given by the spiritual father, with respect to this extremely serious sin and specific crime, also requires special attention. The penance serves as an adjunct [help] in the therapy of the soul; but as we have said, the faucets [taps] of tears must also be opened. These will wash away the blood of abortion, so that a person may subsequently feel communion with God. **Confession alone, therefore, is not enough. What counts, what will change and alter God’s embittered and poisoned heart, what will restore it to its original condition prior to man’s sin, are the tears of repentance** flowing from the two faucets of the eyes. Before departing from this life, we must alter God’s heart... The more a person repents, and the more tears of repentance he sheds, the more God’s heart is altered. Profound reconciliation takes place between sinful man and God, especially in the case of this crime of abortion, where an unending stream of tears is required. Tears should not cease until one’s last breath...

“All of us should help prevent this crime. **When we learn that someone is contemplating abortion, we should immediately take a firm stand and advise her against it.** Usually, women who have abortions do not see and are unaware of what takes place within them medically. With the slightest difficulty—it also has become fashionable—they proceed to the physician and have an abortion, as if they are disposing of a dog or a cat. **We should dissuade them from proceeding to have the abortion, by telling them that this is the worst possible crime a person can commit**

“As a spiritual father, I advise the following to anyone who has committed this sin, either once or repeatedly: try to heal yourselves spiritually with tears. To speak in human terms, try to efface [wipe out] the sorrow and bitterness from God’s heart. When a person repents, cries, struggles spiritually, and strives to make amends (all of which serve as a form of asceticism), he softens God’s heart. **The great Fathers of our Church declare that repentance can accomplish wonders. It can actually reach the point of completely erasing the recollection of sin from God’s heart;** that is, it can completely obliterate the existence of man’s sin.

“Behold the magnificence of repentance! What then is required from all of us, and first of all me? Repentance! **Every time a person says, ‘I have sinned,’ God responds, ‘May you be forgiven.’** Afterwards, we must also proceed to receive the seal of forgiveness from the [priest’s] epitrachelion, through the power invested by the Law in the Mystery of Holy Confession. With the courage we receive from the Mystery of Confession and from the realisation of the limitless, unceasing, and continuous power of repentance, we will proceed to the throne of the grace of God (Heb. 4:16).



“We should not be apprehensive [uncertain]! We should not lend an ear to despair, but rather race toward the Mystery of Confession. **Never despair! This is the key! No matter how sinful you feel, never**



accept despair. Tightly hold on to hope. Never permit yourself to perish by falling into the depth of despair. After having fallen from one cliff, do not jump off another because this will dishonour and insult God’s glory. Exalt God in your heart to the height that befits His grandeur, for He has the ability to erase every sin. **If God erased all of humanity’s sins with His Crucifixion, what are your sins in comparison, O sinful man?”**

~ Chapter 11 ~

Producing Fruits Worthy of Repentance Shows that Our Repentance and Confession are Sincere

It is not enough to just repent and confess our sins to a priest Saint John the Baptist said to those who approached him to confess their sins, that it is also necessary to produce “fruits worthy of repentance” (Matt. 3:8). This means that **Orthodox Christians are required to show God that their repentance is sincere, and not just empty words.** In the Psalms we read, “Turn away from evil and do good” (Ps. 33:14). Blessed Theophylact of Ochrid explains that **it is not enough to only avoid evil, but one should make a steadfast effort to do good. By doing good, we show that our repentance is sincere, and we attract God’s mercy and forgiveness.** This is what it means to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. Also, it should be known that God has given priests the authority to determine whether a person who confesses to them is sincere in their repentance (Jn. 20:23).



Saint Iakovos of Evia (†1991): “When I confess the Christians and do not see repentance in some of them, I do not read the prayer of forgiveness because I have no right to do so as long as repentance is lacking...” On another occasion, he said: “Let’s say a woman had an abortion and she confesses her sin. As a spiritual father, if I tell her straight away that she is a murderer, that she murdered her child and that she will not commune for five years, then dismiss her from the confessional, what consequences will that have for her soul? Whereas if I speak to her with love and affection, saying, ‘My child, what you have done is not right, it is a sin’; if I do not immediately give her a penance but advice, and see her again in fifteen days or a month, little by little her soul will be put in order. **People should not leave the Church wounded, but healed. I do not hate man, but sin.**”

Here are some ways one can bring forth fruits worthy of repentance and help the souls of children who, through abortion, have died unbaptised.

1. Immediately stop the avoidance of having children

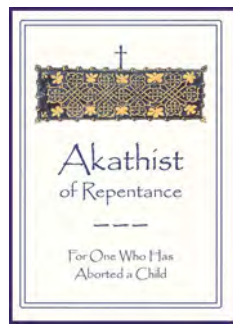
The God-bearers taught that the first thing couples need to do is to **trust in God's will by leaving themselves free**—"Thy will be done" (Matt. 6:10).

2. Helping children in need, and almsgiving

This can include children of poor families, of families that have many children, and those that are neglected. **Help can be in different forms, such as financial assistance, practical help, or spiritual and moral support.** If the penitents are a married couple who, for various reasons, can no longer conceive children of their own, they may wish to consider adopting children. Christians may also sponsor underprivileged children through the many reputable Orthodox organisations throughout the world.

3. The regular reading of Akathists and Canons

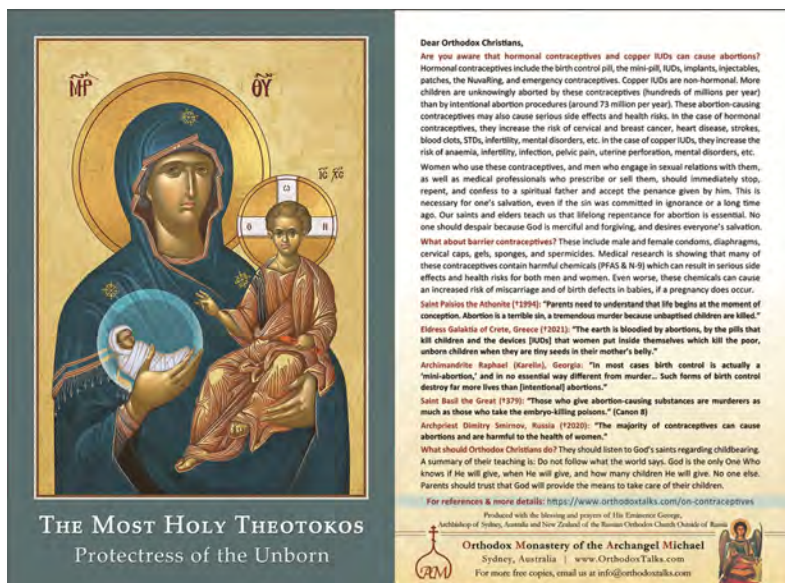
It would be spiritually beneficial for those who have committed the sins of intentional or unintentional abortion to regularly read, at home, the many Akathists and Canons that are available. For example, those who have committed intentional abortion (surgically or by taking medical abortion drugs) could read the *Akathist of Repentance For One Who Has Aborted a Child* (stpaisiusmonastery.org). There are also Akathists and Canons to Christ, the Theotokos, the Guardian Angel, and various saints that could be read by women, and by men who have engaged in sexual relations with women, who were using abortion-causing contraceptives.



These people have no idea whether they have children who were aborted, and if so, how many. If abortions did occur (and this is highly likely), then their children tragically died without baptism. Akathists and canons can also be read by medical professionals—doctors, nurses, pharmacists, abortionists (and their assistants), etc.—who have ever been involved with prescribing, administering, or selling abortion-causing contraceptives and, as a consequence, are complicit in the horrible sin of abortion.

4. The distribution of material in various formats

The distribution of material regarding abortion, abortion-causing contraceptives and the avoidance of having children is an excellent way of producing fruits worthy of repentance. **Apart from the distribution of this free book, our monastery has also produced a laminated icon, “The Most Holy Theotokos: Protectress of the Unborn”** in six languages—English, Greek, Russian, Serbian, Romanian, and Macedonian (Slavic), and soon to come, in Arabic, Bulgarian, Spanish and Georgian. Behind the icon is a brief, but powerful, message. Tens of thousands of these icons have already been distributed free of charge in many countries. Refer to: www.orthodoxtalks.com/on-contraceptives/



The ongoing costs for the icons, this book, and the associated postage and packaging are mostly donated by those who feel strongly about this message. Likewise, those who have been involved in abortion or abortion-causing contraceptives have contributed to this project out of their deep repentance. **It is also important to give a copy of this book and icons to as many of the clergy as possible.**

It is painful to say that there are, unfortunately, clergymen, abbots, abbesses, theologians, and “Orthodox” bioethicists, who consciously ignore and even reject the message about abortion-causing contraceptives. They demonstrate, through their inaction, that they do not care about the murder of millions of children per year around the world due to abortion-causing contraceptives. Neither are they concerned about the effects these contraceptives are having on women’s and men’s physical and spiritual health. Woe to the clergy of the end times! May God enlighten them and bring them to repentance (see Chapter 12).

However, there are also many God-fearing, pious clergymen who genuinely have no idea about the destructive effects of these contraceptives. **The more the message spreads to the clergy, the more they will be enlightened, and they, in turn, will enlighten their flocks.**

Can one truly be a pious clergyman or a pious lay Orthodox Christian whilst doing nothing to help enlighten as many people as possible about these deadly contraceptives? One cannot be a pious person because their inaction shows no love, mercy, or concern for others. **Remember that only the merciful will find mercy at the dread judgement seat of Christ!**



The Dread Judgement Seat of Christ

~ Chapter 12 ~

The Disturbing Silence Among the Bishops and Priests in Our Times

Many will ask: Why is it that we have never heard Orthodox clergy mention anything about such an important message? Why don't our priests and bishops tell their flocks that hormonal contraceptives, copper IUDs, and certain barrier contraceptives can cause abortions, and serious side effects and health risks? Why is there such a disturbing silence? Certainly, for many pious clergy, it is out of ignorance. **Then there are the clergy who justify their unloving silence by saying that this matter is a pastoral issue and should only be discussed in confession.** The problem with this justification is that this matter is rarely brought up in confession by the priests. **Perhaps their silence is because they are negligent, uncaring, weak, or fearful.** Whatever the reason, these characteristics are incompatible with the holy Orthodox priesthood: "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:6-7). Also see 1 Tim. 3:2-9 and Tit. 1:7-9.

There is also much silence when it comes to other serious sins, such as unnatural sexual sins, magic, and above all, the heresy of ecumenism. The clergy, in their sermons and in confession, are not insisting on the need for people to repent and stop committing serious sins. **Elder Ephraim of Arizona often said that the clergy must reprimand serious sins both in their sermons and in confession.** What do other God-bearers say about this silence and negligence? Presented below is only a very small selection:

Saint Gregory Palamas (†1359): "The silence of the clergy is atheism."

Saint Kassiani, Abbess and Hymnographer (†c.865): "I hate silence when it is time to speak!"

Eldress Galaktia, Crete, Greece (†2021): "There is not much talk about repentance from the clergy."

Saint Meletios of Antioch (+381): “Do not show obedience to bishops who advise you to do and to say and to believe in things which are not to your benefit.” Elsewhere the saint said: **“Silence equates to consent.”**

Canons of the Holy Apostles—Canon 58: “If any bishop or presbyter neglects his clergy or the laity, and fails to instruct them in piety, **let him be excommunicated: but if he persists in his negligence and laziness, let him be defrocked as unworthy of the episcopate or priesthood.**”

Elder Justin Parvu, Romania (+2013): “The time will come when you will be sold by your shepherds. They will watch you being ripped apart by the wild beasts and they will not come to your help. Know that these are those apocalyptic times that are about to fall hard on us.”

Saint Nektarios of Aegina, Greece (+1920): “Just as the unskilled doctor sends many people to death, similarly **the incompetent and irresponsible spiritual father sends many souls to Hades.** O, what a terrible evil for someone to find death while seeking treatment.”

Saint Kosmas of Aetolia (+1779): “A time will come when there will not be the harmony that exists now between the laity and the clergy... **The clergy will become the worst and most impious of all.**”

Metropolitan Neophytos of Morphou, Cyprus: “Three saints told me that **the next World War will take place because of the sexual sins, the abortions, and the witchcraft that are taking place, for which people do not repent.** The sexual sins are not only those committed by the youth, but especially of married couples because they defile the Holy Mystery of their Marriage*. These are great issues, as you can see. The Holy Eldress Galaktia of Crete told me the following: **‘God will forgive all the sins of those bishops and priests who will speak out publicly against these sins.’**”

* When the Metropolitan speaks about married couples committing sexual sins, he is referring to unnatural sexual sins, that is, the sins of sodomy (oral and anal sex). However, when he speaks about sexual sins committed by the youth, he is referring to fornication (sexual relations outside of marriage which can include the sins of sodomy). According to the Holy Canons the sins of sodomy committed within holy marriage are far worse than when committed outside of marriage. See pp. 62-63.

Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco (+1966): “In the last days, evil and heresy will have spread so widely that **the faithful will not be able to find a priest or shepherd [bishop] to protect them from delusion and guide them to salvation.** At that time, the faithful will not receive proper guidance from men [the clergy]; but **their guide will be the writings of the Holy Fathers.** Especially at this time, every believer will be responsible for the whole fullness of the Church [the Orthodox Faith and Tradition]. Brethren, it is time for us all to undertake our responsibility to God and to history. **Do not tolerate any more foolishness or misguidance from priests or bishops.** Do not turn a blind eye for you will be co-responsible. The Saints are forewarning you.”



Saint Nikolai Velimirovich of Zhicha, Serbia (+1956): “Are the people at fault if godless elders [spiritual guides] and false prophets lead them astray? The people are not at fault to as great an extent as their elders and the false prophets, but they are at fault to some extent. For God gave to the people also to know the right path, both through their conscience and through the preaching of the word of God. **Thus, the people should not have blindly followed their blind guides when they led them on false paths and distanced them from God and His laws.**



Brethren, God is just, and He knows the measure of everyone’s faults, and He will not allow the small and ignorant to suffer as much as the learned and the great.”

Saint Paisios the Athonite (†1994): “Also, we should know well that our Orthodox Church does not have even one shortcoming. **The only apparent insufficiency is the shortage of sober Hierarchs and Shepherds with a Patristic foundation.** ‘Few are chosen.’ This should not, however, be upsetting. The Church is Christ’s Church, and He governs Her.”

Saint Nilus (†1651): “Toward the middle of the 20th century... Christian shepherds, that is, bishops and priests, will be filled with vainglory (with some exceptions), utterly failing to distinguish the right way from the left. The customs and traditions of the Christians and of the Church will change. Purity will depart from society, and immorality will dominate. **The Churches of God will be deprived of godly and pious shepherds.** And woe to the Christians remaining in the world at that time!”



Abba Pambo (†375): “In the last times, the love for God in many souls will grow cold [Matt. 24:12] and great distress will fall upon them. There will be conflict between nations, migrations of peoples, unstable kings, rulers will be corrupt, the priests will become prodigals [i.e. immoral, corrupt], and the monks will live negligently. **The clergy will be indifferent concerning salvation, as much for their own souls as for the souls of their flocks, and they will despise any such concern...** As for the lives and teachings of the Holy Fathers, the clergy will not have any interest to hear them, and much less to imitate them. The bishops of those times will be subservient [i.e. obedient and compliant] to the powerful of the world, and they will make decisions according to the gifts they receive from everywhere, and consulting the rational logic of the academics.” [Editor’s note: This happened during COVID-19.]



How do we recognise a good priest or bishop?

Metropolitan Augoustinos of Florina, Greece (+2010)

The Metropolitan often spoke out against Orthodox clergy who were **silent, weak, slack, and betrayers of Orthodoxy**. The Metropolitan was highly respected by the living saints of his time for his strength and zeal. Saint Paisios the Athonite (+1994) referred to him as a gift of God to the Church, the ‘New Chrysostom’, walking the path of the Holy Apostles, following in the footsteps of the Holy Fathers. Metropolitan Augoustinos remains a legend in the minds and hearts of all those who were touched by this giant of a bishop and fearless defender of Orthodoxy. The following sermon titled, “The Christian in the End Times” is most enlightening.

“My beloved, I must admit a bitter truth: those who are struggling to keep the Orthodox faith are few. The immense trend is for people to slowly distance themselves from the Orthodox faith. I’ll say something that I’ve never said before. You’ll say it’s egotistical, but I’ll give you a set of scales so you can weigh the priests, the bishops and all the clergy and theologians. What is that set of scales? **What is the sure sign of a priest?** To gather prosphora? To perform nice services? To preach sweetly and ‘usefully’ from the ambo [pulpit] and make a few young ladies tear up emotionally from his contemplative thoughts? What is the sure sign of a priest and bishop in these difficult years? **The sure sign of a bishop and a priest is their fighting spirit, their outspokenness.** It’s what the Apostle Paul said, that all who desire to lead a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). **If you see a priest, if you see a theologian, if you see a metropolitan or archbishop who is not being persecuted, but is enjoying the love and honour of all**, then the following word of God is being applied: ‘Woe to you when all men speak well of you’ (Lk. 6:26). You should know very well, that that person is not heading in the right direction.



The same thing applies if he is called Orthodox but doesn't want to go against the trend, the avalanche which is coming to demolish the world.

An Orthodox priest goes against the trend.

Saint Athanasius the Great was one man, but like the mythological Atlas he carried all of Orthodoxy on his shoulders. Saint Mark of Ephesus was one man, but he alone carried all of Orthodoxy. Saint Photios was the same.



There were only a few of them, but Orthodoxy is not won, it does not survive, with numbers but with faith. Because the worth of a faithful priest, the worth of a faithful bishop, the worth of a faithful archbishop, the worth of a faithful layman or woman, cannot be compared with the whole world. **So, we must not despair that this betrayal of faith is happening all around us.** I recommend one thing to you. Don't tell me 'He is good, he is an important theologian, he gives speeches, he opened an academy on Plato and if you hear him, he's fantastic!...' Weigh him to see if he has a little of the spark of Saint Mark of Ephesus, if he has a little of the spark of Saint Photios, if he has a little of the spark of Cerularius [the Patriarch of Constantinople Michael I], if he has a little of the spark of Papoulakos.* That uneducated man stood up to the whole world. I say these things knowing well my position as a Greek and a bishop—I have enormous responsibilities. I am always ready to be sacrificed. I dare to say, perhaps for the last time from this holy stand: Whoever loves God, whoever loves the Church, we have Panaghia [the Theotokos] with us. We have all those saints who fought and fight for our Orthodox faith. **Whoever is with the devil, let them sit down and keep their mouth shut, because their cowardice is diabolical, their charm is diabolical, their reasonings and arguments are diabolical:** those people** who seek to alienate a handful of people who are tortured and terrorised and persecuted for the faith of Christ.

* Saint Christophoros "Papoulakos" (†1861)

** Referring to the clergy who remain silent and do not fight against sin and heresy.

“We always have the oath of the fearless youth of Athens as a motto. These brave young men of Ancient Greece, up at the Acropolis vowed: ‘Either on my own or with others, I will defend all things holy and sacred.’ And I, a small soldier, state with courage: ‘Either on my own or with others, I will defend the holy and sacred things of our faith until the last drop of my blood is spilled.’ And all of you, instead of clapping in vain, instead of praising me, I want you to pray hard. Because there are only a few Orthodox remaining, and the battle is prolonged, and we will see new things happening. **Not only in our little Greece, but in all the breadth of the world, Satan has taken up arms and is raging to uproot the Orthodox faith from inside people’s hearts.** I don’t know what will happen. I don’t know what persecutions those of us bishops who stopped the commemoration of Patriarch Athenagoras [of Constantinople, a notorious ecumenist], and all the clergy supporting us, will face. I don’t know to what Mt. Athos we will seek refuge. **One thing I know: that no matter what happens, even if the stars fall and the rivers dry up and the world is turned upside down, one thing I know—and I completely believe it—that in the end, Orthodoxy will be victorious.**

“My best friend, Fr. Christopher Kalyvas, who is an important person, a historical figure, said to me years ago when we were talking: ‘Hey Augoustinos, don’t you understand what will happen? The devil is using all the means he can to demolish the Church. **In the end days he will use one last weapon: he will dress the priests and bishops, who will really be his own people. He’ll give them pectoral crosses and staffs, with the purpose of demolishing the Church through the bishops.**’”



At a special gathering to support and honour families with many children

Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (†407)

After reading this book, especially this chapter regarding the clergy of the last times, some will say that no one has the right to “judge” the clergy.

They blindly ignore the fact that many of the clergy are intentionally

silent and/or negligent when it comes to

Orthodox Christians who: i) use

contraceptives that can cause abortions,

birth defects, and serious side effects, and

ii) avoid having children. For 2000 years,

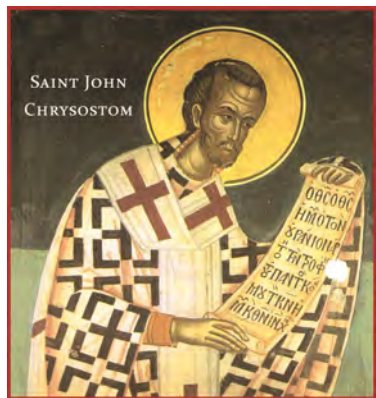
any clergyman who openly condemned

the sins of the world has been hated,

slandered, and persecuted—“Have I

therefore become your enemy because I

tell you the truth?” (Gal. 4:16). Saint John



Chrysostom, one of the greatest saints in the Orthodox Church, was also accused of being judgemental. In his sermons, Saint John would often speak

out against the sins of the clergy, the Emperor and Empress, and the people,

without mentioning any names. He especially spoke out against the rich

who, out of greed and an absence of mercy, did not help the poor. The

following information about Saint John Chrysostom has been paraphrased

from *The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints (November)* by Saint

Demetrius of Rostov, distributed by Saint Herman Press (pp. 270-282):

The rich grew to hate him, since they were condemned by their consciences

but were in no way willing to stop their sins. They could not endure to

hear John’s words because their hearts were hardened and filled with hate.

They plotted to do him evil and began to spread false rumours about him.

Those who hated the saint’s teachings cursed when they heard his good

and wise words, foolishly twisting their meaning. They would say, ‘**When**

the Patriarch preaches in the church, he does not teach but condemns; he

does not instruct, he insults. Rather than encouraging the Emperor and

Empress, he abuses them and all the authorities.’ They also said that John

was lacking in mercy and failed to cover the sins of his neighbour.

In response to these accusations, Saint John Chrysostom said: “The Empress desires that I should be like a dead person, which sees no evil and does not hear the voices of the wronged or their weeping and sighs. She does not want me to say anything against those who sin. **But since I am a bishop and the care of souls has been entrusted to me, I must watch over all with a never-sleeping eye and hear the petitions of all, instructing and reprimanding those who do not wish to repent.** Indeed, I know that if I do not condemn sin and correct evildoers, I bring about my own everlasting punishment. **I fear to keep silence in the face of evil, lest the words of Hosea serve to condemn me:** The priests have hid the way of the Lord (Hos. 4:6). For the divine Apostle Paul commands that **those who continue to sin are to be corrected in front of everyone, so that the rest will also be fearful of sinning** (I Tim. 5:20). Thus Saint Paul teaches: ‘Preach the word, in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, encourage with great patience and teaching’ (II Tim. 4:2). In my sermons I do not condemn the sinners, but only sin. I have not spoken directly concerning anyone in particular, nor have I ridiculed anyone, nor have I made mention of the Empress’ name to reproach her. I have rather taught and continue to teach all in general to do no evil and to take care not to offend their neighbors. **If the conscience of someone who has heard my words condemns him for some wicked deed, he ought not to be angry with me but with himself. Let such a person turn away from evil and do good..** But I will not cease to speak the truth. It is better for me to please God than man, ‘for if I yet pleased men, I would not be a servant of Christ’ (Gal. 1:10).”



We end this book with the following words of Saint John Chrysostom, which we believe sum up the reason that the Orthodox clergy have reached the stage of being silent about the greatest holocaust of all time:

“I do not think there are many bishops that will be saved. Most of them will lose their souls... Do you not see how many capabilities a bishop must have?” (See 1 Tim. 3:2-9 and Tit. 1:7-9.)

The Guttmacher Institute is a US non-profit organisation which strongly promotes abortion, and is considered the world's foremost authority on abortion statistics. According to this institute, around 73 million intentional abortions take place worldwide each year (i.e. medical and surgical abortions on demand). Just in the USA, there are more than two million contraceptive failures annually. More than half of these end in intentional abortion. Of course, they do not mention how many abortions occur each year as a result of hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs. According to the United Nations' *World Family Planning 2022* document, 410 million women use hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs. If we assume that a woman using these contraceptives will experience at least one abortion each year, this would still come to 410 million abortions per year. Undoubtedly, the number would be higher because these contraceptives cause abortions at a high rate. One should note that this number of abortions per year does not include abortions/miscarriages that occur due to some barrier contraceptives such as spermicides. If these were included, the number would be far greater. Are we looking at a figure of well over half a billion unintentional abortions in the world per year? Abortion is the greatest holocaust of all time, and only God knows the exact number of victims. Since the introduction of contraception, legalised abortion, and no-fault divorce, we have witnessed the steady collapse of marriage and family life. As a result, the birth rate in many countries has significantly fallen and they are now very concerned about depopulation.



*Christ weeping over an
aborted embryo*

Due to the negative influence of feminism, among other modern ideas, many Orthodox Christians are confused regarding the issues of contraceptives, the avoidance of having children, and even abortion. The silence or wrong advice of numerous medical professionals, and especially of our clergy, concerning these issues only adds to the confusion. As such, Orthodox Christians are ultimately making many wrong decisions which have negative consequences on both physical and mental health. More importantly, these wrong decisions also have spiritual consequences that can affect one's salvation.

How then are Orthodox Christians meant to know the truth, especially what the Church teaches regarding these issues? How can we be sure that what we are hearing or reading is the true teaching of the Orthodox Church? Who should we listen to? The answer to this is that Christians must listen to the enlightened and holy Orthodox God-bearers.

In this book, we will learn what unbiased medical research and honest medical professionals say about contraceptives, and the side effects and health risks associated with them. We will also learn how a large number of them can cause abortions and miscarriages, specifically hormonal contraceptives, copper IUDs, and certain barrier contraceptives.

Above all, we will learn what the enlightened and holy God-bearers teach about abortion, embryo-killing contraceptives, the state of the souls of aborted children in the afterlife, the avoidance of having children, and the disturbing silence of many of the clergy. The God-bearers also provide us with soul-saving guidance regarding repentance and confession, God's love, mercy and forgiveness, and what is meant by producing fruits worthy of repentance.



**For more detailed information on the topic of this booklet,
visit: www.OrthodoxTalks.com/On-Contraceptives**

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