

not for successes. Doctor Jesus came for the sick, not for the well (Lk 5:30-32). Penance is his treatment.

9. When you feel alone, it is much harder to overcome sexual temptation than when you realize Jesus is there with you (Mt 28:20). The practice of the presence of Christ sheds a light and a power on any situation. Stay close to Jesus through the sacrament of the Eucharist. He is the light who dispels the darkness. The closer you are to him, the more light will be in your life. The more you ignore or run away from him, the more darkness you will get into.

10. Human friends also help or hinder, encourage or tempt. Be sure your friends really *are* your friends, helpers not hinderers (Heb 10:24-25).

11. Read God's Word every day. It is not just any book; it reveals God's power (Rom 1:16). God meets you and strengthens you through his Word. Read it as a prayer.

53. Is abortion always wrong?

The Catholic Church has always taught that abortion is murder: killing an innocent human being. An unborn baby is certainly innocent, and it (rather, *he* or *she*) is a human being, not an "it". And abortion means killing him or her. To call it "terminating a pregnancy" is simply dishonest and evasive language.

No matter how hard the alternative to murder is, no matter what society allows you to do, and no matter what the circumstances of your situation may be, murder is never right. In considering abortion, the alternative is often very hard: nine months of an unwanted

pregnancy. And society says "Do it." The U.S. Supreme Court made abortion legal with its *Roe vs. Wade* decision, just as that same Supreme Court said slavery is legal and that a black man is only three-fifths of a human being with its *Dred Scott* decision in the last century.

The Supreme Court is not infallible. But God is. And God says, simply, "Do not commit murder" (Ex 20:13).

The Church is not being hard and tough and unfeeling when she strictly forbids abortion. She is being kind and compassionate and loving when she does this. Jesus always sided with the weak, the oppressed, the poor, and the defenseless. No one is more defenseless and weak than an unborn baby.

From the moment of conception each baby is a separate and distinct human individual, with his or her own genetic code, which decides which sex, eye color, temperament, body shape, and many other features that person will have right from the beginning. There is no clear dividing line after the moment of conception, but only gradual growth. You did not become a human being only when your umbilical cord was cut, or at the moment when your head first came out of your mother's womb, or three or six months after conception; you were a human individual from the beginning, from conception. That is a scientific fact. Just as a baby moth is a baby moth from the moment of its conception, a baby human being is a baby human being, and not something else, from its beginning. It is not a fish or an ape or a tumor. And it is not part of the mother. If it were, then the mother would have four legs, four arms, and four eyes!

God created us in his image, with souls (Gen 1:27; 2:7). That is why human life is sacred. That is why mur-

der is wrong. Many people in our society no longer believe this. Instead of a “sanctity of life” ethic, they believe in a “quality of life” ethic: that you are a human being, with human rights, including the right to life, the right not to be killed, only if the quality of your life is high enough (and who’s to say what “high enough” is?), for instance if you have a high enough I.Q., and if you are not too severely handicapped. Nothing could be farther from the philosophy of Jesus.

Mother Teresa says that abortion kills twice: it kills the body of the baby and the conscience of the mother. Women who abort their babies feel great guilt years afterward. Abortion exploits and harms women.

What would you think of a person who killed his pet cat or dog because he did not want him, instead of giving him to his neighbor who offered to take him and care for him and love him? There are tens of thousands of loving couples who cannot have a baby of their own but want very much to adopt one. They have to wait for years, usually, and sometimes for nothing, because there are very few babies available for adoption, because millions are destroyed by abortion instead. Adoption is a far better solution to an unwanted pregnancy than murder. Adoption helps (1) the baby by keeping it alive; and it helps (2) the mother’s conscience and respect for life; and it helps (3) the new parents to be happy by giving them what they want more than anything else in the world—a baby to love.