

Student 2: High Merit

NZQA Intended for teacher use only

When a woman decides to have an Abortion, she does so because she has thought about the issue. An abortion is when a pregnancy is ended before the term has been completed. The foetus dies. This can occur in two ways either naturally or it can be procured by a surgical procedure. Abortion has been legal in some countries like the UK since 1967, but in NZ this was not the case.

①

However, in 1971 New Zealand women who had lots of money and found themselves pregnant could obtain a legal abortion in the two States of Victoria and New South Wales in Australia due to a change in the law over there but not in New Zealand. Abortions were performed in New Zealand in 1974 in the Auckland Medical Aid Centre. However this was closed until a legal battle was sorted and abortion was allowed and restricted to public hospitals in 1975. The legal battles continues and although it is legal under the contraception, Sterilisation, and Abortion Bill. After many amendments and one all-night sitting, the National bill was passed on 15 December 1977. There have continued to be challenges to the Bill since this time by lots of different groups.

In New Zealand the Abortion procedures are either through 'Surgical abortion', by dilatation of the cervix and suction curettage is the most common method used in New Zealand for first trimester and some second trimester abortions. Or by a 'Medical abortion' which uses pills rather than surgery. It is more like an induction of labour and is commonly used for second trimester pregnancy. These two are known as 'induced abortions' and are different from a 'Spontaneous abortion' which is usually called a miscarriage. Early medical abortion (up to nine weeks) was introduced into New Zealand in 2001 and is currently provided in the following units (Te Mahoe Unit in Wellington, Masterton Hospital in the Wairarapa, Gisborne Hospital, Lyndhurst Clinic in Christchurch, Dunedin Hospital in the Otago District Health Board, the Auckland Medical Aid Centre (AMAC), the Epsom Day Unit and Surgery on Shakespeare in Auckland).

①

The Catholic Church does not support abortions as they are considered to be killing a baby which is made in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:27).

③

This follows on from the ethical principle that of the dignity of the human person where every person is considered sacred.

②

The Church recognises that this is a very important issue and has ethical implications. The Church expects people to protect those who are the most vulnerable in society and this includes a baby in the womb. Especially since the baby would not be able to defend itself. The NZ Bishops statement called a 'Consistent Ethic of Life: Te Kahu-O-Te-Ora' says that we need to create 'an environment within families and society where pregnant mothers are support'. This means we need to move away from the 'Culture of death' spoken of by Popes St John Paul II and Benedict XVI and have or create a society which sees each individual from conception as being one which needs to be loved and nurtured by us all.

②

③

The ethical principle of love and justice may also be considered in relation to abortion. To love means to give justice so that a person is respected and has their human rights protected, so that their development is possible.

②

This is because the love of neighbour, in this case the foetus demands justice for the unborn child, which has the potential to be all that is human from the moment of conception (Psalm 139:13). The human person at all stages of life must be protected and its rights defended at all costs (*Donum vitae*, n. 5).

3

By promoting this ethical principle the Catholic Church is trying to transform those structures that make it possible to destroy the human being and so the love of God.

2