

-Establishment of a Virginia Commission for Nonviolent Conflict Resolution which will be ready and able at all times to offer its skills and services to police, to correctional institutions, to mental institutions, to schools and to situations involving domestic violence, spouse abuse or child abuse.

I DO NOT ENDORSE OR SUPPORT:

-The death penalty nor would I sign any death warrant.

-Reversal of the 1973 ROE v. WADE abortion decision of the United States Supreme Court.

Statement on abortion and the death penalty

As a death penalty abolitionist, I am sometimes asked: **What is your belief on the taking of innocent human life in abortion?** I may reply that we, Donna and I, have thirteen children, which is true. Often, that seems to satisfy the questioner and the discussion moves on. As cradle Catholics from a traditional mold, opposing abortion was as reflex an action as making the sign of the cross. From 1975 through 1981, seven consecutive years, with Donna and/or some of our children, I regularly attended the annual January March for Life in Washington, D.C. In the mid-70's, we also occasionally joined a picket at a local outpatient abortion clinic, a death chamber in the view of picketers. Still, the question is a good one, a hard one, a fair one and an important one which cannot be evaded. Induced abortion is the deliberate ending of unborn human life, an event which people of good will ought not to celebrate; and in the great majority of cases, it is the killing and removal of a normal fetus. Abortions at any stage appear contrary to the good, the true and the beautiful; and those done after the first trimester are particularly gruesome. Abortions done near or beyond the time of fetal survivability/viability (this time becomes ever shorter as medicine advances) seem unnecessary if not inexcusable. In natural or spontaneous abortions (miscarriages), it has been customary for Catholics to conditionally baptize the fetus. Yet, this fetus is not given the sacrament of Anointing the Sick (formerly Extreme Unction) nor are public funerals or burials usually held after miscarriages when a fetus of nonvia-

ble age is born dead. In pastoral practice, the Catholic church does not minister to such a fetus in the same way it ministers to someone who is born alive but subsequently dies. Our society has not done all that could be/should be done to ease the social and economic circumstances of those pregnant women who may choose abortion out of desperation because they find no real or substantial support for carrying their pregnancy to term.

As a physician, I have personally witnessed the horrible results of illegal, unskilled or self-performed abortions. We definitely should not return to that era. And, for the woman whose life is endangered, who is pregnant due to rape or incest, or who is faced with a severe and/or fatal deformity of the fetus, it is not just to compel her to continue the pregnancy against her will. Though enmeshed in the ambiguities, restraints, conflicts and time pressure of a momentous decision, abortion is voluntary on the part of the mother. Abortion is not an act of punishment or retribution against the fetus. Though not always true, the abortion experience is often a deterrent to subsequent promiscuous or noncontraceptive sex and unwanted pregnancy. Abortion in the United States is not forcibly imposed by government in the name of all the people. In those few instances wherein courts have ordered an involuntary abortion to be performed on an unwilling, competent, dependent minor, a grave moral wrong and great injustice was done. I know the feeling of those who object to their tax money being used to finance abortions, since I feel the same way about the death penalty and nuclear weapons. I believe that it is not unreasonable to expect that a mature, responsible and nonviolent third party (other than the woman and the physician) - ideally but not necessarily a parent - should be notified before abortion is performed on a dependent, unemancipated minor; though this third party should not be permitted to overrule a competent minor if she chooses to abort. The death penalty is state-sanctioned, state-mandated and state-imposed killing of a human who was born alive and who has lived. Though abortion is state-sanctioned/tolerated, it is not state-mandated or state-imposed. Moreover, as a practical matter, civil society cannot abolish all acts of abortion even if it were made illegal; but the death penalty