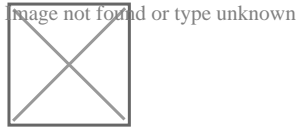


The New Battlefield - the period between conception and implantation (Valarie H. Protopapas)

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The danger in setting the period between conception and implantation as an acceptable time to destroy the already conceived child is that it is both arbitrary and artificial without any real medical, scientific or theological meaning. It has instead the meaning each individual involved cares to give it. Therefore, while one person may speak scrupulously and compassionately only about cases of rape and incest, the less scrupulous will use this «dispensation» — not *oikonomia* — to cover every «traumatic» pregnancy. And, by accepting for whatever «good» reason the legitimacy of the termination of pregnancy after conception, there is no way to intellectually or theologically forbid the taking of that life at a later stage for reasons which may be less «good.» Like the proverbial hole in the dike which begins as a trickle but leads to a flood, such exceptions inevitably lead back to abortion on demand and the death of 1.5 million unborn children annually.



Although the possibility of the interruption of pregnancy between conception and implantation as a mass means of abortion seemed unlikely just a short time ago because of among other reasons the need for surgical intervention, the development and planned marketing of the abortifacient «birth control,» Norplant — whose purpose is to not only prevent conception but to also prevent the implantation of the fertilized ovum when conception has taken place — now makes the period between conception and implantation a new battlefield in the abortion war. Of course, the ubiquitous «low-dose» birth-control pill may also act as a chemical abortifacient and the common IUD (intra-uterine device) does so as well.

RU486, the «abortion pill,» does not even have the spurious legitimacy of preventing conception but is an abortifacient pure and simple. In reality, RU-486 is used long after the implantation of the child has taken place and so it cannot be considered within the context of this particular situation. However, Dr. Bernard Nathanson has advised that an actual «morning after» pill (a drug which can be taken directly after intercourse so that a woman need never know if she has been pregnant) is close to release. If this is indeed the case, it becomes even more urgent to restore the understanding of the sanctity of life from the moment of conception. In fairness it must be stated that Fr. Harakas has always clearly stated that his position on the acceptability of destroying an embryo conceived through rape/incest after conception but prior to implantation reflects only his opinion and not Church doctrine.

(To be continued)