

A Life Issues Forum *Special Edition*

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A Concern for Catholics in Public Life

Recent efforts to perpetuate and expand abortion in state laws have illuminated the deplorable actions of some Catholic public officials and advocates. Their efforts to support and even celebrate such legislation will result in killing many more unborn children, as well as the spiritual and emotional wounding of their mothers and fathers. Advocating for intrinsically evil acts, like abortion, is a serious immoral act – one that involves grave matter, the prerequisite for the commission of a mortal sin. While we can object to the actions of these public officials, we are not able to judge their souls. At the same time, we know there will be a Judgment Day.

Conscious and unrepentant mortal sin endangers our eternal souls and places ourselves on a path to Hell. To receive our Eucharistic Lord, while in a state of mortal sin, only further jeopardizes the eternal fate of our souls. Sincere repentance, a conversion of heart, and a genuine effort to make amends for the harm caused by our sin, are essential to be able to receive God's mercy.

In my own role as a bishop, I have a serious responsibility to make certain that those entrusted to my pastoral care are aware of the moral gravity and spiritual consequences of their actions. I also have a serious obligation to protect other members of my flock from being misled by a seeming tolerance of the scandalous behavior of some Catholics in public life. It is critically important that I attempt to enter into dialogue with such Catholic leaders. If even after an extended dialogue a Catholic in public life persists in scandalous actions, I have found it necessary to request that they not present themselves to receive Holy Communion, for their own spiritual welfare and for the protection of many others from moral confusion.

I invite all Catholics to pray for spiritual healing for all those involved in or advocating for legalized abortion. When we truly repent, God is always eager to lavish us with His mercy.

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