



THE PARISH OF ST. VINCENT FERRER AND ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

CHURCH OF ST. VINCENT FERRER: 869 Lexington Ave, New York, NY 10065

CHURCH OF ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA: 411 East 68th Street, New York, NY 10065

www.svsc.info | (212) 744-2080 | parish@svsc.info

September 11, 2016 — 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

On Wednesday, September 14, we will commemorate the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross with a Sung Mass at 6:30 PM at St. Catherine of Siena. After Mass, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will take place through the night, concluding before the 7 AM Mass for the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

PARISH VESPERS

Parish Vespers will begin on Sunday, September 18, at St. Vincent Ferrer. A chant class will be taught by our Music Director, James Wetzell, at 4:30 PM, followed by Vespers at 5:15 PM.

PARISH INVOLVEMENT

After all Masses the weekend of September 18, representatives of our various committees and groups will be available to speak with those who would like to deepen their involvement in the parish.

PARISH STUDY

On Tuesday, September 13, at 6:45 PM, we will begin our new series of Parish Study lectures in the Parish Hall at St. Vincent Ferrer. This Fall we will focus on the Book of Psalms. Fr. Innocent will introduce the series with a talk on "Why the Psalms?"

CHRISTMAS FAIR PLANNING MEETING

On Tuesday, September 13, at 7:00 PM, parishioners are invited to the first planning meeting for our Annual Christmas Fair in St. Dominic Hall at the Church of St. Catherine of Siena. At this meeting, we will discuss the planning and organization of our three-day fair, which will be held from December 2-4. If you cannot attend this meeting, but would still like to be involved in the planning of this event, please contact Kim Quatela at 203-520-5089 or kburde3@gmail.com.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) is a program for adults who wish to become Catholic. Our parish RCIA program will begin in mid-September 2016. Those who are considering enrolling should contact the parish office to set up an appointment with Fr. Innocent Smith, O.P.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

On September 15, the Social Concerns Committee will start our bingo games for the women living at the Park Avenue Armory. Last bingo season, our parish provided enough items for almost 1100 prizes. These gifts were greatly appreciated by the women. As usual we need handbags, baseball caps, tops, sweat pants, socks, medium to large size bottles of shampoo, conditioner, face wash, body wash, body lotion, hair brushes and combs... tooth brushes and toothpaste...cologne, and slightly used jewelry. Anything you think the women would use. Kindly leave your donations at the Parish Office.

PURGATORIAL SOCIETY

Each Friday, the 7:00 AM Mass at St. Catherine of Siena is offered for the deceased enrolled in the St. Catherine's Purgatorial Society. Enrollment of a deceased family member or friend is available in the church office for \$35.

MASS AND CONFESSIONS ST. VINCENT FERRER

SATURDAY VIGIL: 6:00 PM

SUNDAY: 8:00 AM, 12:00 PM,
6:00 PM

WEEKDAYS: 8:00 AM, 12:10 PM,
6:00 PM

SATURDAY: 8:00 AM

Confessions

SATURDAY: 5:00–5:50 PM

WEEKDAYS: 5:20–5:50 PM

Adoration

WEDNESDAYS: 7:30 PM – 9:00 PM

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

SATURDAY VIGIL: 4:00 PM

SUNDAY: 10:00 AM, 5:00 PM

WEEKDAYS: 7:00 AM, 5:15 PM

SATURDAY: 9:00 AM

Confessions

SATURDAY: 3:00–3:50 PM

WEEKDAYS: 4:40–5:05 PM

LITURGY OF THE HOURS & OTHER PRAYER ST. VINCENT FERRER

MONDAY–FRIDAY:

7:40 AM (MORNING PRAYER)

5:30 PM (OFFICE OF READINGS
AND EVENING PRAYER)

WEDNESDAY:

6:30 PM (ROSARY)

7:30 PM (HOLY HOUR)

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

THURSDAY:

4:00 PM (HOLY HOUR)

MONDAY–FRIDAY:

5:00 PM (ROSARY)

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

PRAYER GROUP:

WEDNESDAY 6:30 PM

QUEEN OF PEACE PRAYER GROUP:

SATURDAY 9:30 AM

PARISH OFFICE

St. Vincent Ferrer
869 Lexington Ave, NY, NY 10065
(212) 744-2080 | parish@svsc.info
Office Hours: Monday–Friday:
9 am–1 pm, 2–5 pm

St. Catherine of Siena
411 East 68th Street, NY, NY 10065
Office Hours:
Monday – Friday: 10 am–3 pm

PARISH STAFF

Very Rev. Walter Wagner, OP
Pastor

Rev. Joseph Allen, OP
Vicar

Rev. Albert Paretsky, OP
Vicar

Rev. Innocent Smith, OP
Vicar for Formation

Bro. Damian McCarthy, OP
Sacristan

Deacon John F. Powers
Lee Ann Rubino
Business Manager

James D. Wetzel
Director of Music and Organist

Lisa Harrelson
Director of Catechesis and
Youth Ministry

Rachel Miller
Administrative Assistant

Sr. Padraic Mary McGuinness, OP
Receptionist

Tony Hicks
Church Custodian

Tracey Hicks
Church Custodian

ST. VINCENT FERRER HIGH SCHOOL

(212) 535-4680
Sr. Gail Morgan, OP
Principal

PARISH INFORMATION

REGISTRATION

Please register as a member of our parish if this is where you regularly attend Mass. Registration forms are available in the Parish Office, or online at www.svsc.info/register.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

To arrange for the baptism of a child, call the Parish Office. Baptisms are usually celebrated on Saturdays, but other arrangements may be made depending upon the circumstances. A baptism preparation class is held at St. Vincent Ferrer on the second Saturday of the month at 12 PM. Please call the Parish Office to register.

SACRAMENTS OF FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND FIRST RECONCILIATION

Youth participate in the sacramental preparation program coordinated by Lisa Harrelson (lharrelson@svsc.info).

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Youth participate in the sacramental preparation program coordinated by Lisa Harrelson (lharrelson@svsc.info). Adults who have not been confirmed should inquire with the Parish Office about preparing for confirmation.

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

To begin making arrangements for a wedding at St. Vincent Ferrer or St. Catherine of Siena, contact the Parish Office to arrange a meeting with a priest. More information is available at www.svsc.info/weddings.

SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Please contact the Parish Office if you or a loved one would like to receive the Anointing of the Sick at the parish, at a nearby hospital, or at home (for those who are homebound).

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)

RCIA is a class for adults interested in becoming Catholic. To learn more, contact Fr. Innocent Smith, OP, at the Parish Office.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

For information and/or registration for classes held at St. Vincent Ferrer or St. Catherine of Siena, contact Lisa Harrelson (lharrelson@svsc.info).

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

Parish Study is a program for adults interested in learning more about the Catholic faith. It meets on Tuesday evenings in the Fall and Spring. To learn more, contact the Parish Office or check our website at www.svsc.info.

YOUNG ADULTS

St. Vincent Ferrer often hosts events of the New York Frassati Fellowship. For more information, visit www.frassatiny.com.

LOOKING AT WHAT SCARES YOU

9/14 offers a way to look at 9/11.

This Week we celebrate the Triumph of the Cross. Historically, the feast commemorates the finding of the True Cross by St. Helen, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, who legalized Christianity in the Roman Empire. But at a deeper level the day celebrates God's great work of reversal. The cross began life as an instrument of execution, with the same claim to exaltation, as say a guillotine or an electric chair. Yet Christ has left us the Cross as an emblem of redemption and mercy. Now we wear it around our necks, gold leaf it and mount it on our churches, and lovingly trace it upon ourselves at life's most crucial moments. How does this reorientation come about?

The answer appears in the very Passion of the Lord. Alone in the Garden, Jesus reveals that He in His humanity, does not want the Cross. Further, the authorities lay it on his shoulders as a burden unmanageable even for one whose humanity is faultless. After carrying it to Golgotha, the Cross becomes an instrument of degradation, pain, and death. But from Jesus Crucified flee his friends and followers, and by its earthly power it seems to evaporate the effectiveness of his ministry.

In short, the cross brings down upon Jesus what we fear most, falling alone to the bottom of life. The Cross invites us to recognize that we are all at risk of losing health, wealth, companions, and even reputation. Of course, in death, we all fall to the bottom. Moreover, the exalted Cross of Christ does not promise Christians that this will not happen to us, but it does signify that God is more powerful than falling to the bottom of life and so the Resurrection shines out from the Death of Christ as the Father's testimony to this.

The mystery of the Cross makes it powerful for us to look straight at the things we fear. First, we admit the truth of our fears, grounded in a realization of the fragility of human life and circumstance. Then, in faith we recognize that God is more powerful than what we fear, even if what we fear transpires.

As a daily challenge, I try to look directly at the homeless in our streets, and to see in them my own economic, even emotional vulnerability. The cliché, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." captures this. But my gaze must also draw upon my faith to recognize that even if I were to lose my human moorings, I would not lose God. Resurrection faith is not magical, it takes clear account of the vicissitudes of human life, but also of a vastly more potent divine life.

For people of faith a commemoration such as 9/11 demands contemplation on several levels. First we gaze upon the terrible loss of life, and the gratuitous violence that wrought it. But then we also allow the attacks to show us the fragility of our civilization, even in this technological age. Subsequent terrorist attacks, and the rise of ISIS have continued to impress this message upon our minds and imaginations. Hopefully a deep consideration of our social vulnerability does not shut us down, but enables us to grasp the preciousness of the common life we share. Further, an anniversary such as this draws the roots of our faith further down into the soil of God to find the water of reassurance that no terrorism is more powerful than God, even if it appears to succeed.

I invite you to celebrate with our parish community the great feast of the Holy Cross, this coming Wednesday, September 14, and its companion Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows on the following day, Thursday, September 15. These days offer a singular chance to behold God's presence TO the suffering and THROUGH the suffering. He does not take away the bottom of human life, but makes it the way to His life.

Peace!



Fr. Walter

MASS INTENTIONS
ST. VINCENT FERRER

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11
6:00 pm (Vigil) Gerard, Helen, &
Judy Carroll (D)
8:00 am For the People of the Parish
12 pm John Weisz (D)
6:00 pm Arthur David Hill (D)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
8:00 am Bart & Bridget
McGovern (D)
12:10 pm Antoinette DiFazio (D)
6:00 pm Nely Miranda (L)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13
8:00 am Nick Mahoney (D)
12:10 pm Marie & Jack Powers (D)
6:00 pm Claudette Colbert (D)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14
8:00 am Pericles Consunji (D)
12:10 pm Patricia, Richard, &
Garrett Keegan (D)
6:00 pm Aurora Forero (D)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15
8:00 am Joseph McGovern &
Kathleen Redmond (D)
12:10 pm Rose Pesenti (D)
6:00 pm For the Deceased members
of the Lay Fraternities of
St. Dominic (D)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16
8:00 am For the Deceased members
of the Order & Parish (D)
12:10 pm Mark Flesher (D)
6:00 pm Clarel Owarish
Radicella (D)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17
8:00 am Ella & Frank
Fay-Farena (D)

MASS INTENTIONS
ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11
4:00 pm (Vigil) Mildred Strona (D)
10:00 am For the patrons of the
Shrine of Saint Jude
5:00 pm Edwin, Frances, and Daniel
Lake (D)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
9:00 am For the Province of
St. Joseph
5:15 pm James Betso (D)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13
7:00 am Una Sheehan
5:15 pm Jairo Enrique Diaz
Grana Dos

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14
7:00 am Una Sheehan
5:15 pm Terence Dolan (D)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15
7:00 am For the Victims of
Terrorism
5:15 pm Barbara Kretkowski (D)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16
7:00 am St. Catherine of Siena
Purgatorial Society (D)
5:15 pm Maria Cecelia Punzalan &
Marina Lucido

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17
9:00 am For Those who work for
Peace

PARISH PRAYER
INTENTIONS

*Contact the Parish Office to add a
name to this list*

Len Bencivenga, Suzan Eraslan,
Monica Farren, Adrienne Fashay,
Sr. Timothy Goettisheim, O.P.,
Christopher Heath, Rev. Chris
Johnson, O.P., Helen Johnson,
Carolyn Kelly, John Kelly, Sarah
McDermott, Anthony Mendola, Ann
Morris, Stephen Osso, Beth Weiss,
John Weiss, & Aquila Zacharilla.

Please pray for the repose of the souls
of Mary O'Hagan, David Stapleton,
Hugh Sykes, Aldy Maynard-Taylor,
Beth Weiss, & Gerald Westminster,
and the souls of all our recently
deceased.

We continue to pray for the sick, the
dying, and their families in Memorial
Sloan Kettering Cancer Center,
NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, the
Hospital for Special Surgery, and
Rockefeller University Hospital.

CANDLE INTENTIONS

The seven-day candles are available for
an offering of \$15 each.

St. Vincent - Sanctuary Lamps
Elizabeth Donnelly (d); Ramon &
Fernando Gonzalez (l); Edward C.
Perry (d); Florence A. Schwede (d);
Aquila Zacharilla; Intention of Do-
nor; Special Intention

St. Vincent - Sanctuary Madonna
Jack Ryan Keegan (l)

St. Vincent - Pieta Lamp
Well-being of Christians in the
Middle East

St. Catherine - Mary Candle
Priscilla Ventigan

Mass Intentions may be reserved in the Parish Office Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, and in the Church Office of St. Catherine of Siena Monday through Friday, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Religious Education

in the Parish of St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Catherine of Siena
Registration Form • 2016-2017

Child's First Name _____ Last Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Child's School for 2016-2017 _____ Grade in School 2016-2017 _____ Parish _____

I am interested in registering my child for: (*Sessions begin the Week of September 18, 2016*)

- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level 1 for **3-year-olds – Kindergarten**: Sundays 10:00 – 11:15 a.m.
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level 1 for **3-year-olds – Kindergarten**: Thursdays 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level 2 for **1st grade – 3rd grade**: Sundays 11:15 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level 2 for **1st grade – 3rd grade**: Sundays 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level 2 for **1st grade – 3rd grade**: Wednesdays 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level 2 for **1st grade – 3rd grade**: Thursdays 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level 3 for **4th grade – 6th grade**: Mondays 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

- Graded Program **4th grade /5th grade /6th grade** at **St. Vincent Ferrer**: Tuesdays 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.
Please indicate which grade level: _____

- Ignite Youth Ministry for **7th grade – 8th grade**: Mondays 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Sacramental information about my child:

- Yes No My child has received the Sacrament of First Reconciliation.
- Yes No My child has received the Sacrament of First Holy Communion.
- Yes No My child has received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Annual Fee for 2016-2017 – \$250 per child	Amount paid:	
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Please make checks payable to "Parish of St. Vincent Ferrer & St. Catherine of Siena". Tuition is due in full on the first day of the session. We accept registrations on a "first come, first served" basis. Please contact us within the first 3 weeks to receive a 75% refund of the annual fee. After the first 3 weeks, fees are non-refundable. *CGS Level 1 only*: In the first 3 weeks of the CGS Level I sessions, we assess if the child is ready. If the child is too young (i.e., not potty-trained, not able to follow instructions), we will ask them to wait 6 months. Please contact **Lisa Harrelson, Coordinator of Religious Education**, with any questions you may have at: **(212) 988-8300, ext. 186** or **lharrelson@svsc.info**. **Other than the Graded Program on Tuesdays, all sessions will be held at the St. Catherine of Siena Priory.**

By signing below, I understand and agree to the policies above.

Parent Name (*print*) _____ Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____ Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Please return your completed form and payment to:

FAITH AND ETHICS FORUM - 2016-2017

An Open Invitation to All Students of the Health Professions

How can I guide patients, families and colleagues in decisions about complex moral issues?

Why are moral distress and moral relativism so evident in today's health care environment?

Why are conscience clauses important in the delivery of health care services?

What is happening to the dignity and freedom of the sick in the new health reform agenda?

How does the Catholic moral tradition inform and guide my practice?

These and many more questions are the focus of a new series of small group discussions facilitated by the Dominican Friars Health Care Ministry of New York. Monthly discussions provide a vehicle and a place where medical and nursing students and all students of the health professions (including interns, residents and fellows) of all faiths can come together for discussions about faith and contemporary ethical issues in health care which affect their lives as persons and as clinicians in a continuously changing health care delivery system.

Forums are held on the third Sunday of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 PM (except for June, July and August) in St. Dominic Hall following the 5:00 PM Mass at St. Catherine of Siena Church, 411 E. 68th Street, New York, NY. There is no charge for this series but an RSVP email is required. Light refreshments are served. Forums for the 2016-17 academic year are scheduled for: **September 18, October 16, November 20, January 15, February 19, March 19, April 23 and May 21.**

For more information or if you would like to participate please contact Bro. Ignatius Perkins, OP, Executive Director (brotherignatius@dfhcmny.org) or one of the Student Coordinators: Grace McNerney (gemac612@gmail.com), Jessica Edgecomb (Jessica_Edgecomb@nymc.edu).

FRATER URBAN HANNON TO SPEAK AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

On Wednesday, Sept 14th at 7:30 pm, Frater Urban Hannon will speak at Columbia University (Corpus Christi Church) on "How to be a Radical." The event is co-sponsored by Columbia Catholic Ministry. Frater Urban Hannon, O.Praem. is a seminarian with the Canons Regular of Prémontré, at St. Michael's Abbey in Orange, California. He was born in Tennessee and raised mostly in Texas, but New York City is the place he calls home outside the monastery. Frater Urban did his undergraduate work at Columbia, where he triple-majored in philosophy, religion, and medieval studies, while also serving as co-president of Columbia Catholic Undergraduates. After college he worked in young adult outreach for the Archdiocese of New York, taught group fitness classes in the city, and worked as a paralegal. He did his IL year of law school at NYU, before deciding to enter religious life with the Norbertines. Frater Urban (then "Michael W. Hannon") has given lectures at Notre Dame, Yale, and the United Nations, and he has published essays in *First Things*, *Fare Forward*, *Public Discourse*, and *Ethika Politika*. Register at <http://www.thomisticinstitute.org/ti-on-campus>.

MARY MANNING WALSH HOME WALK-A-THON

The Volunteer Association of Mary Manning Walsh Home invites the parishioners of St. Vincent Ferrer & St. Catherine of Siena Parish to join our 29th Annual Walk-A-Thon on Saturday, September 17, 2016. The Walk will raise funds to support programs which the volunteers provide for the residents. Participants' fee is \$15 for adults and \$12 for children (pets are also welcome without charge) which includes a souvenir T-shirt, refreshments in the park, and lunch upon return to the Home. An optional Mass will be offered at 8 AM in the Holy Family Chapel at the Home, 1339 York Avenue, at 72nd Street, followed by a light breakfast in the auditorium. The parade of walkers to Central Park begins at 9:30 AM and all are invited to return for a gala party with food and beverages at 1:30 PM in the Mary Manning Walsh Home auditorium. A video will be taken during the Walk and shown during lunch. We look forward to seeing you and having your participation in this fun-filled successful event. For further information contact Sr. Michael Mary at (212) 628-2800.

LAY FRATERNITIES OF ST. DOMINIC

Our Lady of the Assumption Chapter of the LFSD meets on the third Thursday, for approximately two hours each month, directly after attending the 6:00 PM parish Mass in St. Vincent Ferrer Church (meeting in the Parish Center, street level, left of Priory stairs). Dominican Laity share deeply the spiritual charisms of the Dominican Order, while remaining in the lay state. More information is available at <http://www.laydominicans.com>.

CENTER FOR LEARNING AND LIVING

The Center for Learning and Living, Inc., a non-profit school for people 55+, offers St. Catherine's and St. Vincent's parishioners a special discount on its courses, in thanks for the church allowing us to rent classroom space. Our 8-week fall semester starts September 20, with classes on a wide variety of interesting topics in the daytime on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. For the discounted fee of \$235, parishioners can sign up for as many courses as they like. Topics include literature, poetry, the Middle East, U.S. politics, constitutional law, film, and historical figures. The full course schedule and more information about CL&L is online at clandl.org or people interested in learning more can call (212) 644-3320. CL&L will also have a table at the 3rd Ave. Street Fair between 69th and 70th Streets Sept. 11 from 10-6. First-time students can attend classes free the first week.

PARISH OFFERTORY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Beginning September 1st, all checks for the Parish should be made payable to the Parish of St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Catherine of Siena.

As of September 11th the new offertory envelopes will be distributed. There will be a gap for those who have been receiving envelopes for St. Catherine's, for September 4th. Please submit your offertory in a Welcome envelope or a personal envelope, making sure to include your name and address, for recording purposes.



DFHCM of NY

DOMINICAN FRIARS HEALTH CARE
MINISTRY OF NEW YORK

Reflections on Ethics, Faith & Health Care

EDITOR: FR. JONAH POLLOCK, O.P., S.T.L.

The WRONGFULNESS of DIRECT ABORTION

By Fr. Jonah Pollock, O.P., S.T.L., Associate Director, Dominican Friars Health Care Ministry of New York

HUMAN LIFE IS A PRECIOUS GIFT FROM GOD who made man and woman in His own image and likeness. The human being has the dignity of being a person, not just a something but a someone, by virtue of possessing a rational and spiritual soul. Human life, which begins the moment a distinct human being is conceived in the womb of his or her mother, is therefore sacred and inviolable. It is not to be harmed, let alone destroyed. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “No one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being” (CCC 2258).

AS WE REFLECT UPON THE ETHICAL TREATMENT of human beings in the beginning stages of life, we find that our first conclusion has already been drawn. It is the conclusion expressed in the fifth commandment: “You shall not kill.” Setting aside the difficult cases in which killing might be justified, such as self-defense, military combat and capital punishment, we can understand the commandment as meaning, at the very least, “You shall not murder.” That is to say, “You shall not deliberately kill the innocent.” When we apply this commandment to the treatment of human beings at the beginning stages of life, between conception and birth, it could be rendered, “You shall not deliberately kill an unborn human being” or “You shall not commit direct abortion.”

DIRECT ABORTION is the deliberate killing of a human being in the womb of his or her mother. When people talk about abortion, this is usually what they mean. However, the term ‘abortion’ can be applied more broadly to include any death of an unborn child. In this sense, an abortion can be either spontaneous, when the death of the child is from natural causes, or induced, when it is brought about through deliberate human intervention. An induced abortion can be either direct, when the death of the child is deliberately chosen, or indirect, when the death of the child is brought about as a side effect of another deliberately chosen action. An example of an indirect induced abortion might be the surgical removal of a pregnant but cancerous uterus. The deliberately chosen action in this example is the removal of the cancerous organ in order to save the life of the mother. The death of the child is a side effect, a regrettable consequence that was not deliberately chosen.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND what is meant by the words “direct” and “indirect” in these considerations. An abortion is called “direct,” not because killing follows directly from a physical action, but because it follows directly from a person’s choice. In the example just considered, the abortion is

indirect not because the doctor’s scalpel directly touched the uterus and not the unborn child. The abortion is indirect because the removal of the cancerous uterus is what the mother and doctor chose to do. That is the direct object of their will. Causing the death of the unborn child is not. If we suppose that their choices were different, if, for example, they chose to remove the woman’s uterus as a way of causing the child’s death, the resulting abortion would not be indirect but direct.

DIRECT ABORTION, the deliberate killing of a human being in the womb of his or her mother, is always morally evil. It is a particular instance of what is forbidden by the fifth commandment. That is to say, direct abortion is an instance of murder.

WE NEED TO BE CAREFUL, HOWEVER, to be clear about what this does and does not mean. It means that direct abortion is included under the definition of murder: the deliberate killing of an innocent human being. It does not mean that everyone who procures a direct abortion is a murderer. To be a murderer is to freely commit murder with an understanding of what it is you are doing. Many mothers, probably the great majority of mothers, who procure the direct abortion of their children, do not freely chose direct abortion with an understanding what they are doing. They may be pressured or manipulated or misinformed or all of the above. In such cases, their guilt for what they have done might be greatly diminished. But no matter what a mother’s degree of guilt might be, she has a loving and merciful God who wants nothing more than to forgive her. As God’s people, we do well to imitate God’s mercy and withhold our judgment.

IN MANY CASES, it is obvious when an abortion is a direct abortion. When a woman chooses to have an abortion because she does not want the child – even if she is pressured, misinformed or otherwise not fully responsible for the evil being committed – it is a direct abortion. In that case, irrespective of that woman’s degree of guilt, the action she chose is morally evil. In some cases, however, it is not so easy to judge whether and induced abortion is direct or indirect, morally evil or morally justified. More difficult cases include when a woman is raped or her life is endangered, situations that many people regard as exceptional. Other less obvious cases involve the treatment of newly developing human beings in scientific experiments or fertility treatments. We will consider those more difficult a cases in future reflections.