
Russia: abortion law a century ago. Catholic Bishops, “tragic anniversary”. Call to prayer for the protection of life

On 18 November 1920, abortion was legalised in the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics by a decree from the People’s Commissariat for Health and Justice. “For the first time in human history, the killing of a conceived child was declared a means to protect women’s health and racial interests”. This is according to a statement issued by the Conference of Catholic Bishops of the Russian Federation today to mark this “tragic anniversary” that we “should not forget”. Since that decision, the statement reads, it has become a common view in society that “abortion can be justified also by economic hardships, that it is a medical procedure, and that it is almost an ordinary act”. And “one of the most tragic consequences of the legalisation of abortion is that the number of victims of voluntary termination of pregnancies exceeds the number of victims of the past world wars”. So today and in the coming days, the Bishops invite everyone to “pray for the protection of life everywhere”, so that “this prayer may be a sign of repentance and commemoration, a call to conversion, an opportunity open to all for repentance and healing, and an intercession for all those who have suffered - those who have died and those who are still alive.

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