

The legalization of abortion in Mexico City: Towards a dignity of women?

La legalización del aborto en la Ciudad de México. ¿Hacia una dignificación de la mujer?

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What can a new book on abortion bring? This publication has an interesting merit: it summarizes the central theses of a personalist approach to abortion. It also examines the role of the feminist movement in the process of decriminalization and subsequent legalization of abortion in Mexico.

It is divided into five chapters. In the first one, «The feminist movement: background, characteristics and postulates» (pp. 17-46), the author addresses the concept and genesis of feminism. In particular, she is interested in the description of the feminist mo-

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vement in Mexico with its different stages: from the 1970s to the present day. For example, the different demands of the movements are analyzed, such as the fight against violence against women and the chosen motherhood.

In chapter 2, «The United Nations and the Feminist Movement» (pp. 47-63), the Cairo and Beijing conferences are discussed as important moments in the process of considering abortion as a possible human right. The Declaration of Human Rights is analyzed and the relevance or otherwise of new assumptions derived from those in the original Declaration is discussed. Ms. Sánchez points out: «...we warn that the new human rights endorsed by the UN do not take on the characteristics of fundamental human rights, inasmuch as they are based on the deconstruction of what is given by nature» (p. 55).

In chapter 3, «Women, responsible for the crime of abortion?» (pp. 65-86), the author shows that in modern Mexico (20th century until today) there has never been any protection of the life of the unborn. A comparison is made of the criminal codes of 1929, 1931, 2000, 2004, until the legalization of abortion in 2007. And it highlights one of the ethical difficulties of application when it points out, for example, in the cases of abortion due to malformation of the product, that it is difficult to differentiate this case from eugenics. The author summarizes her chapter well when she points out: «Having made a review of Mexican legislation in relation to abortion from the 1929 Criminal Code to that of 2007, we can note a certain progressiveness in access to abortion». In the first year cited, two excuses were used to absolve the woman, such as the danger to her life and her recklessness. In the year 1931, a new one was included: pregnancy due to rape. In 2000, two new causes were introduced: congenital malformation and forced artificial insemination. Until this year, there was talk of excuses, since abortion was still considered a crime, but was not punished. In 2004 the concept of «exclusion of responsibility» was introduced,

so that abortion, under these exceptions, is no longer considered a crime (p. 84).

Chapter 4, «Abortion, evil of our time» (pp. 87-106), studies abortion from a medical perspective and analyzes some statistical data on it in Mexico. It also addresses the phenomenon of post-abortion stress.

Chapter 5, «The woman before the dilemma of being a mother» (pp. 107-124), analyzes the notion of person and its character of fundamental anthropological principle for the defense of the nascent life. It comments on the ontological status of the human embryo, where the embryo is considered a person at any stage of its development. It also examines some elements of the moral decision.

The book closes with conclusions that summarize the process of legalization of abortion and its ethical and social implications.