

bear on him. They cut his salary in half. His daughter was fired from her job. His son "failed" his university entrance examinations. He was attacked in the press and on television. The Socialist State -- they said -- had provided him with an education so that he could perform abortions, and now he was carrying out sabotage against the State. Two years of persecution brought him to the brink of nervous exhaustion. He was on the point of asking the hospital administrator to reassign him to abortion duty, when Thomas Aquinas appeared to him in a dream. Patting him on his shoulder, Thomas said: "You are my good friend. Continue your struggle". Adasevic did not go to the administrator. He decided to fight on.

He got involved in the pro-life movement. He traveled throughout Serbia, lecturing and giving talks on abortion. Twice he succeeded in airing on Yugoslav state television Bernard Nathanson's *The Silent Scream*, a USG recording of an actual abortion. In the early 1990s, thanks largely to Adasevic's activism, the Yugoslav parliament passed a decree protecting the rights of the unborn. The decree went to President Slobodan Milosevic, who refused to sign it. Then the war broke out, and the decree fell into abeyance. As for the war, Adasevic wonders: "To what else can we attribute the slaughter that took place here in the Balkans if not our alienation from God and lack of respect for human life". And to make his point he describes what is common practice in Serbia: "Since our laws protect the life of the child only from the moment of its first breath, that is, from the instant it utters its first cry, abortions are legal in the seventh, eighth, and even ninth month of pregnancy. Actually the word "abortion" has no place here, since it applies more to miscarriages. Beside the birthing seat stands a bucket of water. Before the child has a chance to utter a cry, you stop up its mouth and plunge it under water. Officially this is an abortion, and it is all perfectly legal, since the child never draws a breath".

Here Adasevic likes to cite Mother Teresa of Calcutta: "if a mother can kill her own child, what is there to prevent you and me from killing one another?" Today, most abortions are performed in private clinics, which do not release figures on aborted pregnancies. Adasevic estimates that for

every twenty-five children conceived barely one live birth results. Twenty-four beings are destroyed. "What further complicates statistical analysis in this area -- he observes -- is the use of abortifacients such as the IUD and the RU-486 pill, which are officially classified as contraceptives. The IUD is an abortifacient; for the coil acts as a sword, which severs the tiny human being from its source of food in the womb. It is a terrible death. A human being dies of starvation in a place that is filled with nourishment.

"This is a real war, waged by the born upon the unborn -- he adds. -- In this war I have crossed the front several times: first as an unborn child condemned to die, then as an abortionist myself, and now as a pro-life apostle. "I have also become interested in the life of Thomas Aquinas, about whom I knew nothing before. I have often wondered why he appeared in my dream, and not other saints, especially since he is a Catholic saint, and I am Orthodox. To explain this, I started studying Thomas' writings. Guess what I found? According to Aquinas, human life begins 40 days after fertilization in the case of men, and 80 days in the case of women. So what is a child in those preceding days? Nothing? I think what Thomas said gives him no peace in the eschaton. Mind you, it should be stated that Thomas accepted this view from Aristotle. Aristotle was the great authority then. Thomas allowed himself to be influenced by his view, and committed an error.

"It was a long time before I grasped the fact that a child in the mother's womb is a living person, that it is a living person not from the time it draws its first breath, as the communist professors taught us, but from the instant the human embryo is formed, that is, from the moment the spermatozoon joins with the egg cell".

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Pamphlet 503

## **“Champion of Abortion” Becomes Defender of Life: the Story of Stojan Adasevic**



Stojan Adasevic will never forget the day he was organizing the filing cabinet in the doctors' room. He was a medical student at the time. A number of gynecologists entered the room. Paying no attention to the student crouched over a pile of papers in the corner, they began swapping stories about their medical practice.

Dr. Rado Ignatovic recalled a patient who had come to him for an abortion. The procedure failed because the doctor had been unable to align the cervix. As the gynecologists went on discussing the woman's history, Stojan, who had been listening in, suddenly stiffened. He realized that the woman under discussion -- a former dentist at the nearby clinic -- was his mother.

"She's dead now" -- observed one of the doctors - - but I wonder what happened to the unwanted child?" Stojan couldn't resist. "I'm the child!" he said, getting up. Silence fell over the room. Seconds later the doctors were walking out.

Over the years Dr. Adasevic would have cause to recall that event many times. It was perfectly clear to him: he owed his life to the fact of a failed abortion. He would never make such a blunder himself. Many women were referred to him because of difficulty in aligning the cervix. This was never a problem for Stojan. He became the best abortionist in Belgrade....

Before long he had surpassed his master in the profession -- Dr. Ignatovic, to whose incompetence he owed his life. "The secret lies in training the hand through frequent procedures" he would say, citing the German proverb: Übung macht Meister (practice makes perfect). Faithful to this maxim, he would perform from twenty to thirty abortions a day. His record was thirty-five abortions in one day. Today he has difficulty reckoning up the abortions he performed in his twenty-six years of practice. He estimates anywhere between 48,000 and 62,000.

For years he remained convinced that abortion, as taught in the medical faculties and textbooks, was a surgical procedure not unlike that of removing an appendix. The only difference was in the organ removed: a piece of intestine in the one case, and embryonic tissue in the other. Doubts began to arise during the 1980s when ultrasound technology came to Yugoslavian hospitals. It was then that Adasevic first saw on the USG monitor what had until then been invisible to him -- the inside of a woman's womb, a live child, sucking its thumb, moving its arms and legs. As often as not, fragments of that child would soon be lying on the table beside him. "I saw without seeing -- he recalls today. -- Everything changed after I started having the dreams".

### **Dr. Adasevic's dreams**

Actually, it was the same recurring dream. It haunted him every night, day after day, week after week, month after month. He dreamed he was walking in a sunlit meadow. Beautiful flowers grew all around. The air was thick with colored butterflies. It was warm and pleasant, yet, despite this, some anxious feeling oppressed him. Suddenly the meadow was filled with laughing and running children. They were playing ball. In age, they ranged from three or four to about twenty years. All were strikingly beautiful. One boy in particular, and two of the girls, seemed strangely familiar, but he could not recall where he had seen them. When he tried to speak to them, they ran off in terror, screaming. The entire scene was presided over by a man in a black habit who watched intently in silence.

Every night Adasevic would wake in terror and stay awake till morning. Herbal remedies and pills

were useless. One night, he became distraught in his dream and began chasing the fleeing children. He caught one of them, but the child cried out in terror: "Help! Murderer! Save me from the murderer!" At that moment the man dressed in black, turned into an eagle, swept down, and pulled the child away. The doctor woke up, his heart thumping like a hammer in his ribs. The room was cold, yet he was hot, drenched in sweat. In the morning he decided to see a psychiatrist. Since there were no immediate openings, he booked an appointment. That night he decided he would ask the man in his dreams to identify himself. This he did. The stranger said: "Even if I told you, my name would mean nothing to you". When the doctor persisted, the man finally replied: "I am called Thomas Aquinas". Indeed, the name meant nothing to Adasevic. It was the first time he had heard it. The man in black continued: "Why don't you ask who the children are. Don't you recognize them?" When the doctor said he didn't, he replied: "Not true. You know them very well. These are the children you killed while performing abortions". "How is that possible?" countered Adasevic. "These are grown children. I have never killed born children". Thomas replied: "Do you not know that here, on this side of the eschaton, children continue to grow?" The Doctor refused to yield: "But I have never killed a twenty-year-old boy". "You killed him twenty years ago" replied the monk, "when he was three months old".

It was then that Adasevic recognized the faces of the twenty-year-old boy and the two girls. They resembled people he knew well, for whom he had performed abortions over the years. The boy looked like a close friend of Adasevic's. Stojan had performed the abortion on his wife twenty years ago. In the two girls the doctor recognized their mothers, one of whom happened to be Stojan's cousin. Upon awaking, he decided he would never perform another abortion in his life.

### **I held a beating heart in my hand**

Waiting for him upon his arrival at the hospital that morning was a cousin along with his girlfriend. They had booked an abortion with him. Four months pregnant, the woman was about to do away with her

ninth consecutive child. Adasevic refused, but his cousin was so importunate that he gave in: OK, but this was the very last time. On the USG monitor he clearly saw the child with its thumb in its mouth. Stretching the uterus, he inserted the forceps, took hold of something, and pulled. In the jaws of the forceps was a little arm. He placed it on the table, but in such a way that one of the limbs' nerve endings touched a drop of spilled iodine. Suddenly, the arm began to twitch. The nurse standing beside him almost screamed out. Just like frogs' legs in a physiology lab! Adasevic shuddered, but went on with the abortion. Again he inserted the forceps, gripped, and pulled. This time it was a leg. Just as he was thinking: "Better not let it touch that drop of alcohol", a nurse standing behind him dropped a tray of surgical instruments. Startled by the crash, the doctor released the forceps, and the leg landed right beside the arm. It too began to move.

The staff had never seen anything like it: human limbs twitching on the table. Adasevic decided to mash up what was left in the womb, and pull it out in a formless mass. He began mashing, squashing, crushing. Upon withdrawing the forceps, now certain that he had reduced everything to a pulp, he produced a human heart! The organ was still beating. Weaker and weaker it beat, until it stopped altogether. It was then that he realized he had killed a human being. The world turned dark around him. He cannot recall how long this lasted. Suddenly he felt a tug on his arm. A nurse's terrified voice called out: Doctor Adasevic! Doctor Adasevic! The patient was bleeding. For the first time in years, the doctor began praying earnestly: "Lord! Save not me, but this woman". Normally it could take up to ten minutes to clean the womb of all remaining embryonic matter. This time two insertions of the instrument through the vagina were enough to complete the task. When Adasevic removed his gloves, he knew this was the last abortion he would ever perform.

### **The pail: instrument of abortion**

When Stojan informed the head of the hospital of his decision, there was a considerable stir. Never before in a Belgrade hospital had a gynecologist refused to perform abortions. Pressure was brought to