

HOLY SEE

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RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS

(Unless otherwise indicated, the reservations and declarations were made upon ratification, accession or succession)

Declaration:

The Holy See considers the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment a valid and suitable instrument for fighting against acts that constitute a serious offence against the dignity of the human person. In recent times the Catholic Church has consistently pronounced itself in favour of unconditional respect for life itself and unequivocally condemned "whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself" (Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, 7 December 1965).

The law of the Church (Code of Canon Law, 1981) and its catechism (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1987) enumerate and clearly identify forms of behaviour that can harm the bodily or mental integrity of the individual, condemn their perpetrators and call for the abolition of such acts. On 14 January 1978, Pope Paul VI, in his last address to the diplomatic corps, after referring to the torture and mistreatment practised in various countries against individuals, concluded as follows: "How could the Church fail to take up a stern stand ... with regard to torture and to similar acts of violence inflicted on the human person?" Pope John Paul II, for his part, has not failed to affirm that "torture must be called by its proper name" (message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1 January 1980). He has expressed his deep compassion for the victims of torture (World Congress on Pastoral Ministry for Human Rights, Rome, 4 July 1998), and in particular for tortured women (message to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, 1 March 1993). In this spirit the Holy See wishes to lend its moral support and collaboration to the international community, so as to contribute to the elimination of recourse to torture, which is inadmissible and inhuman.

The Holy See, in becoming a party to the Convention on behalf of the Vatican City State, undertakes to apply it insofar as it is compatible, in practice, with the peculiar nature of that State.