

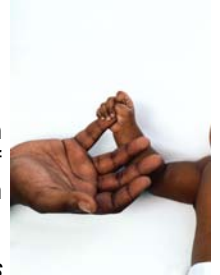


FOR LIFE

Volume 14, Issue 1

First Quarter
2008

The Human Family, A Community of Peace Papal Message for '08 World Peace Day



Key Points

- The first form of communion between persons is that born of the love of a man and a woman who decide to enter a stable union in order to build together a *new family*. But the peoples of the earth, too, are called to build relationships of solidarity and cooperation among themselves, as befits members of the one human family. . .
- The family is therefore rightly defined as the first natural society, "a divine institution that stands at the foundation of life of the human person as the prototype of every social order".
- In a healthy family life we experience some of the fundamental elements of peace: justice and love between brothers and sisters, the role of authority expressed by parents, loving concern for the members who are weaker because of youth, sickness or old age, mutual help in the necessities of life, readiness to accept others and, if necessary, to forgive them.
- Consequently, whoever, even unknowingly, circumvents the institution of the family undermines peace in the entire community, national and international, since he weakens what is in effect the primary agency of peace.
- The social community, if it is to live in peace, is also called to draw inspiration from the values on which the family community is based. . . it is essential that we should all be committed to living our lives in an attitude of responsibility before God, acknowledging him as the deepest source of our own existence and that of others. By going back to this supreme principle we are able to perceive the unconditional worth of each human being, and thus to lay the premises for building a humanity at peace. Without this transcendent founda-

tion society is a mere aggregation of neighbours, not a community of brothers and sisters called to form one great family.

- *For the human family, this home is the earth*, the environment that God the Creator has given us to inhabit with creativity and responsibility. We need to care for the environment: it has been entrusted to men and women to be protected and cultivated with responsible freedom, with the good of all as a constant guiding criterion.
- Efforts must also be made to ensure a prudent use of resources and an equitable distribution of wealth. In particular, the aid given to poor countries must be guided by sound economic principles, avoiding forms of waste associated principally with the maintenance of expensive bureaucracies. Due account must also be taken of the moral obligation to ensure that the economy is not governed solely by the ruthless laws of instant profit, which can prove inhumane.
- In difficult times such as these, it is truly necessary for all persons of good will to come together to reach concrete agreements aimed at an effective demilitarization, especially in the area of nuclear arms. At a time when the process of nuclear non-proliferation is at a standstill, I feel bound to entreat those in authority to resume with greater determination negotiations for a *progressive and mutually agreed dismantling of existing nuclear weapons*.

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Results of For Life Post Card Responses

Postcards Mailed: 627

Question 1: Has this publication been of assistance to you in your ministry? Yes = 75 No = 5

Question 2: I pass this publication on to others as a resource of authentic Catholic Social Teaching? Yes = 57 No = 18

Thank you—Your responses help to shape future issues!

Please copy and distribute freely.

From the Director

It is just a couple days before Christmas, and I want to celebrate. So as I sit to write this column, I am reminded of the film that I use so often when I give talks about Consistent Ethic of Life. The name of the film is "Celebrate What's Right with the World." Today, as I write, I celebrate what's right with life issues as they have taken place in the past year. As I began to gather my thoughts and notes for this theme, I was surprised by the triumphs we have celebrated for life in 2007. I will highlight some, and hopefully you will add a few as you read this article. In this spirit of hope and peace, let us celebrate 2007. For Life!

In 2007 there have been some concrete expressions of honoring the dignity of persons at the very beginning of life. On April 18th in a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court of the United States upheld a ban on a specific abortion procedure used in late-term pregnancies. This procedure is often called partial birth abortion. This is the first time since Roe v. Wade that the United States has put any type of restriction on abortion in our country. Then in early December, Dr. Shinya Yamanaka and Dr. James Thomson announced a method of using skin cells to obtain pluripotent stem cells. By "reprogramming" the skin cells, the researchers found that they could reproduce the features that scientists find most desirable in embryonic

stem cells. Dr. Thomson is, surprisingly, the scientist who originated the first stem cell lines used for embryonic stem cell research. Both of these advancements in the cause for life are the beginning and hope for so much more.

The penalty of death in the judicial systems of the United States has also seen some progress toward life in the last year. DNA testing of death row inmates have assisted in eliminating the potential deaths of innocent prisoners. Many states have imposed moratoriums on use of the death penalty because of a case that is currently on the docket for the Supreme Court. In Ohio, we have had a temporary moratorium from Governor Strickland that is not, however, tied to the Supreme Court case. And just this week an Ohio death row inmate, whose life was pleaded for by John Paul II, won an appeal on his case.

In the American film industry there was a wonderful film produced and distributed by two immigrant filmmakers. "Bella" dubbed a movie about friendship and fate contained beautiful life-giving themes about family, the unborn and non-traditional roles sometimes needed to uphold life. The film also addresses some unresolved issues related to human dignity, such as mental illness, shortfalls in the criminal justice system, the treatment of undocumented immigrants and trials of going through life with an imposed stigma. The film has recently received the Smithsonian Latino Center's "Legacy Award." If you haven't seen it already, I strongly urge you to see this DVD when it becomes available. In the midst of many issues, hope and joy are the experience of this movie.

Finally, there are those "soft" expressions of what's right with life issues. When each one of us spends time with God in prayer as we ponder the situations and discern our own contributions to upholding life, we are participating in the celebration of life. When our own mind or that of another person takes a second look at an issue for what it says about the sanctity of life and the dignity of a person, life is honored and revered. Each donation, each vote, each moment of education are little celebrations of life.

Celebrations of life both large and intimate are the hope-filled, joyous occasions when we honor the gift of our Creator and look ahead to a time when all of life is filled with the gift of Christmas.

Merry Christmas, Blessings in the New Year and Celebrate the Gift of Life!

—Peggy Gerovac

Prayer Corner

A Potter Shaping the Clay

We believe that we are part of God's dream for the church and the world, and that God is shaping us, as the potter shapes the clay, into the kind of human and church community that is the dream in God's heart.



We believe that God has called and chosen us as the potter carefully chooses a lump of clay to make what the potter has in mind.

We believe that when God sees that the church and the world are not coming out right, not according to the divine dream, God does not discard the clay and take another piece, but reworks the same clay, shaping and molding it with firm but gentle hands, on the wheel of life.

We believe that God is shaping and reshaping us . . . to be like Jesus, the compassionate one, As we continue the mission of Jesus in the world . . .

We commit ourselves to shaping with gentle hands the fragile and vulnerable clay, each precious person given to us. We will treat them with the same loving patience we ourselves feel In the hands of the divine potter.

We will open our ears to listen like disciples as God leads us forward on the next part of the journey, The journey we are on together.

And we will join hands as we continue along the way, the way of salvation.

—Southern African Conference of Catholic Bishops

Volume 14

Issue 1

For Life is a quarterly publication of the Pro Life Office, Catholic Charities Parish and Community Ministries, Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, as an educational service for the people of this diocese.

The mission of the Pro Life Office is to proclaim the sanctity and value of human life as a gift from God and the foundation of human dignity, and work to ensure the quality of life at all stages of existence. This office encourages a Consistent Ethic of Life approach in promoting reverence for life, which is rooted in the Gospel and teachings of the Church.

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Hospice: Alternative in the Face of Pressures to Abort

—by Kathleen Naab

NEW YORK, DEC. 2, 2007 ([Zenit.org](#))

Doctors told Mary Kellett that her son Peter was not worth the resources it would take to treat the chromosomal abnormality they detected before his birth.

"Wrap him up in a blanket and let him go," they advised. But Peter's older sister discovered on the Internet that not all babies with trisomy 18 -- the condition affecting her little brother -- died before birth. In fact, she found out, some live two or three decades. Peter's family did not want to abort him. Mary Kellett said the strong discouragement to treat Peter "was and remains the most painful feeling I have ever felt as a mother. We were told he would never contribute to society and would live a life of suffering."

But, she affirms nearly three years later, "Peter is such a great gift to us and to so many. He is a happy, sweet little boy who loves reading the Bible, listening to music and playing with his brothers and sisters. He is not suffering; in fact Peter is the happiest person I have ever met. These special babies contribute to society in the most important way possible: They contribute to our souls."

After her experience with Peter, Mary Kellett decided to found Prenatal Partners for Life, a support group for families who receive adverse diagnoses before or after birth . . .

A health care proxy or a living will— which is better choice?

—excerpt from "Our Sunday Visitor," October 7, 2007



According to Edward Furton, staff ethicist for the National Catholic Bioethics Center, a proxy is typically a better way to ensure the most appropriate means are taken to save your life or help you die comfortably should you become unable to make medical decisions for yourself.

The reason for that, he explained, is because a proxy is a person who can make context-specific decisions, while a living will is a document drawn up for circumstances that can't always be foreseen.

"It's difficult to imagine your demise and predict what you're going to need and not need," Furton said. "It's much better to have a person who knows you and can make decisions based on the situation you're in."

Different states have different regulations governing the naming of a proxy, however, so Furton advised that people consult an attorney first to make sure the proxy conforms to their state's regulations.

Update: Documents approved for Ohio naming a proxy can be obtained from the Pro Life Office.

Something different

The situation confronted by parents of children with adverse diagnoses motivated Dr. Byron Calhoun, vice chair of the department of obstetrics and gynecology at West Virginia University-Charleston, to establish what he calls perinatal hospices, specifically for those babies who are expected to die before or shortly after birth. Perinatal hospice comes into play when a baby is diagnosed with terminal illness before being born, he explained. . .

Calhoun affirmed, "Perinatal hospice is needed to provide an alternative to patients who do not desire termination of pregnancy. There is data to support that patients who terminate pregnancies suffer more emotional trauma than those who carry their pregnancies to a natural outcome."

Twelve years after the first hospice was initiated, there are now 50 programs in the United States: 26 hospital/clinic-based, 16 hospice-based and eight free-standing. . .

For the mom

"It is always better psychologically to carry a sick or dying baby for as long as God allows," she said. "Women who abort often spend the rest of their lives living with regret and question if they did the right thing. I have never met a mother who has said she has had too much time with her baby."

"I always tell women who are thinking of aborting that they have no idea how many people their baby will touch and the lessons they will teach in the remaining months of the pregnancy and for the time they live. It is always better for a mother's emotional health to embrace God's plan and purpose for their child and not cut short his or her life. Beautiful memories can be made with that time."

Update: Local Perinatal Hospice Program— Hospice of the Western Reserve

Pope Denounces Rich-Poor Divide: Calls It an Offense Against Human Dignity

—VATICAN CITY, OCT. 17, 2007 ([Zenit.org](#))

The growing disparity between the rich and the poor is an offense against human dignity, says Benedict XVI . . .

He added: "the disparity between rich and poor has become more evident and more disturbing, even within the most economically advanced nations.

"This worrying situation appeals to the conscience of mankind because the conditions being suffered by such a large number of people are such as to offend the dignity of human beings and, as a consequence, to compromise the authentic and harmonious progress of the world community . . ."

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Upcoming Events . . .

Fri., Jan. 11, 2008—National Day Human Trafficking Awareness—Liturgy will be celebrated at St. Joseph Center, 3430 Rocky River Dr. at 11 a.m. to commemorate this day.

Sun., Jan. 13—35th Annual Justice March for Preborn Children (formerly known as the Lake Co. March for Life) at 2 p.m. Please park far enough away from the storefronts at the east end of the Great Lakes Mall (Rt. 20, East of 306). Meet along Rt. 20, near the Barnes and Noble Entrance. At 2 p.m., depart eastbound on the Rt. 20 to St. Mary of the Assumption Church. Warm refreshments and pro life education materials will be available in the school's gym. For more info, call Lake Co. Right to Life at 440-255-5257 or email lctrl@ncweb.com.

Fri. & Sat., Jan. 18-19—Prayer Vigil at Holy Family, Stow, will mark the 35th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Decision. Vigil begins with Mass and speaker at 7 p.m. on Fri.; concludes with 5 p.m. liturgy on Sat., Jan. 19. Speaker: Rachel Cunningham on the topic of embryonic and adult stem cell research.

Sun., Jan. 20—"Valuing Life from the Start: Why Catholics, Scientists and Judges Disagree" Professor Andrew Trew, Professor of Philosophy at John Carroll, will speak after the noon Mass in McAuley Hall. He will cover both the abortion issues and embryonic stem cell concerns.

Mon., Jan. 21—March for Life—Charter bus departs at 9 a.m. from St. John Bosco; returns 1 a.m., January 23. Call Frank & Joan Kosmerl at 216-362-6091. (Other departure locations: St. Mary's, Collinwood; Immaculate Conception, Willoughby; St. Gregory the Great.)

**Pro Life Office
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Wish List . . .

Lake County Right to Life Blankets for Babies—A ministerial gift project of Lake County Right to Life in Mentor relies on the generosity of individuals, churches and local businesses who can supply them with yarn, fabric and monetary donations with which to purchase materials. To donate, call Lake County Right to Life at 440-255-5257 or Dawn at 440-428-9023 or Betty at 440-428-4486 or contact by email at: lctrl@ncweb.com. Donations can be mailed to Lake County Right to Life, P.O. Box 1750, Mentor, OH 44061.

Birthright Winter Coat Emergency: As many of you know, Birthright is a wonderful organization that through loving, caring support helps expectant mothers to choose life for their babies. Part of their ministry of caring to families of expectant moms is to provide winter coats for the children. However, Birthright is currently very low on winter coats. Please collect gently worn winter coats sized newborn to 5 and contact Birthright at 440-324-9566 to find out where to drop off the coats.

West Side Catholic Center, located at 3135 Lorain Ave. in Cleveland, is accepting clothing and food donations at the Center Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Because of limited storage space, we ask that donors bring **in-season** clothing only. We also seek donations of basic household items. Clean sheets, blankets, dinnerware, pots, pans and the like are always needed by those struggling to set up house for the first time. For further information, call 216-631-4741.

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Abortion is “Deep Wound,” Says Pope

—VIENNA, Austria, SEPT. 7, 2007 (Zenit.org)

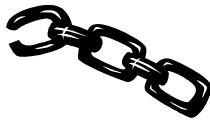
Abortion is not only a "deep wound" in society, it is also the antithesis of a human right, says Benedict XVI.

"I do not close my eyes to the difficulties and the conflicts which many women are experiencing, and I realize that the credibility of what we say also depends on what the Church herself is doing to help women in trouble."

The Pope then appealed "to political leaders not to allow children to be considered as a form of illness, nor to abolish in practice your legal system's acknowledgment that abortion is wrong."

Women Religious on Human Trafficking

—ROME, OCT. 22, 2007 (Zenit.org)



[There was] a five-day seminar of religious women held in Rome entitled "Building a Network: The Prophetic Role of Women Religious in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons." More than 30 women religious from 26 countries launched the International Network of Religious Against Trafficking in Persons (INRATIP).

At their first international conference on human trafficking, Catholic sisters from 26 countries and all continents gathered in Rome. Statistics indicate that there are 800 congregations and over 1 million Catholic sisters in the world. Delegates to the conference committed to use their personnel, resources and historical commitment to those living in situations of poverty to eradicate human trafficking -- a modern-day form of slavery. The following is their statement to the world.

Trafficking in human beings means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons using threat, force, coercion, fraud, deception or abuse of power by payments to achieve consent of control over a person for the purpose of exploitation. Trafficking in children requires only the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall mean, among other things, sexual exploitation, domestic service, forced labor or removal of organs.

Update: Locally there is a group of women religious and lay individuals who have formed the "Collaborative Initiative to End Human Trafficking."

To find out more information call: 440-356-2254 or email collaborative_initiative@yahoo.com

Holy See Extols Respect for Immigrants' Rights

—GENEVA, DEC. 7, 2007 (Zenit.org)

... "two important dimensions of contemporary migrations are not adequately discussed and paid attention to in the formulation of policies: the victims of migration flows and the priority that persons have over the economy."

"Present political trends appear clear and slanted in the direction of responding to the more emotional and vocal demands of public opinion for control and integration."

"In the long run, however, a fair and effective solution will come from a comprehensive approach that embraces all policy components: the rights of the state and of the receiving community, of the migrants, and of the international common good."

"In a parallel way," Archbishop Tomasi emphasized, "the social teaching of the Catholic Church, and in fact that of all religious traditions, looks at migrants as human beings in the first place and then as citizens or guests, or as economic and cultural agents."

How do you respond to those who see condoms as a main means of H.I.V. prevention?

—excerpt from an interview with Michael Czerny, S.J.,
Director of The African Jesuit AIDS Network,
"America," October 15, 2007



Westerners feel very strongly that the condom is the minimal responsible thing to do. But this is to make sexuality into a very individual choice: the exercise of sexuality is not embedded in marriage, much less in the larger cultural context. It comes instead from the idea that I am the sovereign of my behavior and I can do what I want, with whom I want, when I want, as long as I don't involve children or use violence. Within that range of choices, which is practically infinite, I am also responsible for using a condom.

In Africa, sexual expression is rarely consensual and often coerced. Also—this is very important and why I feel the condom is not the answer—much of the propagation of H.I.V. is older men giving it to younger girls. It's not boys and girls who "can't keep their pants on," though today people like to project that image. It's what we call sugar daddies, and to a certain extent sugar mommies, adults who are "buying" sex with younger people and spreading H.I.V.

Women make up nearly 60% of all HIV/AIDS cases in Africa.

Vatican Appeals for Texan on Death Row

—ROME, SEPT. 7, 2007 (Zenit.org)

Cardinal Renato Martino made an appeal for the life of a convicted killer in Texas, scheduled to face the death penalty this month.

Today the president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace urged Texan authorities to commute the sentence of 42-year old Joseph Lave, who has been on death row for 13 years.

The cardinal made his statement during the 12th World Congress of the International Commission of Catholic Prison Pastoral Care, under way in Rome through Tuesday, according to a statement released by the diocese...

Cardinal Martino said in his appeal that "the inhumanity and uselessness of the death penalty ... impoverishes the society that legitimizes it and practices it and leaves no room for rehabilitation of the condemned. . ."

UPDATE: On September 13, 2007 the State of Texas issued a stay of execution. As of this publishing, Joseph Levine is still on death row.

UPDATE 2: In December 2007 the New Jersey State Legislature voted to remove the death penalty.



Makes you go hmmm....

(A Column of Quotes)

"I desire that, on the part of everyone, cooperation intensify to the end of promoting the common good, development, and the safeguarding of creation, returning to the alliance between man and the environment, which must be a mirror of God the Creator, from whom we come and toward whom we are journeying."
—Benedict XVI

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.

—President Dwight Eisenhower

Quarterback a "mass of fetal tissue"

—excerpt from "Our Sunday Visitor,"
September 23, 2007

Tim Tebow, the starting quarterback for the defending national college-champion Florida Gators was *in utero* 22 years ago when his mother became ill with amoebic dysentery and was briefly in a coma.

We'll allow Pam, Tebow's mother, to pick up the story from there: "I was advised to have an abortion. The doctors said he was a mass of fetal tissue and not a baby....Timmy is a miracle baby. He was malnourished at the beginning, but he's made up for it (he's now 6-foot-3, 235 pounds). After such a crazy pregnancy, we feel that God has a special plan for him."

Genetic Diversity: God's Gift

—excerpt from "Our Sunday Visitor," November 18, 2007

At Jennalee Ryan's Abraham Center of Life in San Antonio, Texas, you can have it your way. And that doesn't mean hold the pickles. It means purchasing a manufactured embryo with all the trimmings—trimmings like college-educated mothers and athlete fathers, or willowy mothers and brown-eyed fathers, or even artistic mothers and business-minded fathers. Whatever combination you're looking for, Ryan's list of egg and sperm donors is almost sure to have it.



Not surprisingly, this brave new world has its problems.

Topping the list are all the unborn children killed because they didn't measure up to what their parents wanted. They had the audacity to be conceived too small, too weak or with the wrong set of chromosomes.

Mary Jane Owen, director of Disabled Catholics in Action, agreed. "We don't learn anything from a life that's like vanilla," she said. "We learn through challenges. It's through suffering, enduring, persisting that the greatest strength of character develops."

Owen believes that the more widespread the practice of manipulating children's genetic makeup becomes, the more the culture will suffer.

"Out of diversity comes God's greatest gift to us," she said. "Disabilities come with vulnerabilities. And without our vulnerabilities we don't need each other. Our needs and gifts are interacting threads, holding us together as a Church, as a community, as a nation."

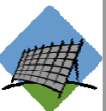
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If you are interested in being notified of timely updates through our email alert system, please send a request to pmgerovac@clevelandcatholiccharities.org. This means you will be notified with updates not only for action alerts, but events, Catholic articles regarding life issues and new links for pro life websites.



Vatican going GREEN?

—excerpt from "Our Sunday Visitor,"
October 28, 2007



Here are some of the environment-friendly and energy-saving measures that have been implemented recently by the Vatican:

- Installed solar panels atop the Paul VI audience hall to provide electricity for light and air conditioning year-round.

- Converted lighting in St. Peter's Basilica to low-impact, energy-efficient bulbs to cut energy consumption by 40 percent.

- Backed planting and establishment of a Vatican Climate Forest in Hungary, the trees of which will convert enough carbon dioxide into oxygen to offset the Vatican's emissions of carbon dioxide, thus making the Vatican a "carbon-neutral state."

