

# FOR LIFE

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## Pope Lists Two Key Ingredients for World Peace

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 8, 2005 ([Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org))—*Benedict XVI says that dialogue and an objective morality are the keys to transform the world into a place of peace ...*

In his message, the Holy Father pointed out the keys "of peace and tolerance," two themes "of vital importance." . . .

"It is the duty of every person of good will, and especially of every believer, to help build a peaceful society and to overcome the temptation towards aggressive and futile confrontation between different cultures and ethnic groups," Benedict XVI said.

However, the Bishop of Rome acknowledged: "This goal can only be achieved if at the heart of the economic, social and cultural development of each community is a proper respect for life and for the dignity of every human person."

Without an objective moral grounding, not even democracy is capable of ensuring a stable peace," he stressed.

"In this sense, moral relativism undermines the workings of democracy, which by itself is not enough to guarantee tolerance and respect among peoples," affirmed Benedict XVI, recalling a point that particularly concerned Pope John Paul II.

Of "fundamental importance therefore," the message continued, is "to educate in truth, and to foster reconciliation wherever there has been injury."

"Respect for the rights of others, bearing fruit in sincere and truthful dialogue, will indicate practical steps that can be taken," concluded the message.

### THE HARDEST HEART CAN'T RESIST

My heart is transformed by the smile of trust given by some people who are terribly fragile and weak. They call forth new energies from me. They seem to break down barriers and bring me a new freedom.

It is the same with the smile of a child: even the hardest heart can't resist. Contact with people who are weak and who are crying out... is one of the most important nourishments in our lives. When we let ourselves be really touched by the gift of their presence, they leave something precious in our hearts.

As long as we remain at the level of "doing" things for people, we tend to stay behind our barriers of superiority. We ought to welcome the gift of the poor with open hands. Jesus says, "What you do for the least of my brothers, you do for me."

—Jean Vanier

## Catholic Assets in the Public Square

*Faithful Citizenship (USCCB)*  
OSV, October 16, 2005



The faith brings three major assets to public life:

**n Consistent moral framework:** The Word of God and the teachings of the Church give us a particular way of viewing the world. Scripture calls us to "choose life," to serve "the least of these," to "hunger and thirst" for justice and to be "peacemakers."

As Catholics, we are not free to abandon unborn children because they are seen as unwanted or inconvenient; to turn our backs on immigrants because they lack the proper documents; to create and then destroy human lives in a quest for medical advances or profit; to turn away from poor women and children because they lack economic or political power; or to ignore sick people because they have no insurance. Nor can we neglect international responsibilities in the aftermath of war because resources are scarce.

**n Everyday experience:** Every day, the Catholic community educates the young, cares for the sick, shelters the homeless, feeds the hungry, assists needy families, welcomes refugees and serves the elderly. In defense of life, we reach out to children and to the sick, elderly and disabled who need help. On many issues, we speak for those who have no voice. These are not abstract issues for us; they have names and faces. We have practical expertise and daily experience to contribute to the public debate.

**n A Community of People:** The Catholic community is large and diverse. They are members of every race, come from every ethnic background and live in urban, rural and suburban communities in all 50 states. But all Catholics are called to a common commitment to protect human life and stand with those who are poor and vulnerable. We are called to provide a moral haven for our democracy, to be the salt of the earth.

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## From the Director

During Christmas, we hear so often the words of the Christmas carol *"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"* (words by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow). The bells ring out the good news that all might know the Christmas message. When the old carol ends we are left with the words, *"Peace on Earth Goodwill to [All]"*. So much of our Christmas celebration leads us to these simple words. We see these words alive in the love among family, in giving of gifts and donations, and in remembering all that we have. We as Church and even as society, with celebration after celebration, reiterate the Christmas words of peace, love and life. We spend this precious season with hearts aglow, peace among people and with loving thoughts of others. At least we try to do so.

When I hear the words *"Peace on Earth Goodwill to [All]"*, I dream about a world when this is the priority every day, for every person, and in every place. To me this speaks of upholding the dignity of people. Yet, it is not just a Christmas sentiment; it can be a guiding light for daily life for each one of us. How can I carry these words as my mantra for daily life into the lives of others who will choose my mantra as their own?

These words, this mantra, are what each of us needs. *"Peace on Earth Goodwill to [All]"*. This mantra, this portion of text, can be used as prayer often throughout our day. We need to see these words in the mail, in email, in books, in magazines, on the internet. We need to hear these words in music, on television, on the radio, in conversation of our own and words of strangers. Imagine the Christmas message alive and active in our everyday, ordinary day lives all year long. We can celebrate and uphold life hearing these words with all the repetitiveness and joy of the Christmas season. Peace will reign when these words echo through our lives day after day.

Yet often words fill our lives that defeat the Christmas message. Some words can be overtly harsh like abortion, euthanasia, and war. Yet some words demean life in concealed ways. During my Christmas celebrating, I went to lunch with a group of friends. Some in the group are visually impaired, blind. Soon after arriving, I was standing near the door as two men rushed to get out of the restaurant. In their rush, I heard one man say these words to the other, "I gotta get out of here there are too many handicapped people". The other man replied with these words, "Yea and there's no such thing as a small handicap". My feelings were hurt. Their words were crushing the dignity of my friends.

***"We know that the truth of human life is infinitely greater than any narrow view that dismisses some lives as disposable"*** —Cardinal Keeler

Another time I read some words that demeaned the Christmas message. I read an article about genetic testing of the unborn. This article said that some genetics that vary from standard can be detected before a child is born. The upside is that the unborn can receive help even before birth. Yet, when the genetic disorder is a syndrome called Downs, eighty to ninety percent of these unborn lives are terminated. This time the words I read led me beyond hurt to disbelief.

I followed up and found two studies to support these statistics. Now some of my brothers and sisters dignity is not only crushed by uttering some hurtful words, some brothers and sisters are not allowed to live and we have the words of the study to show us, good will is not for all.

***"We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution," Pope Benedict pointed out at his inaugural Mass. "Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary."***

Who are the people who enhanced your Christmas celebration? What words did you share that were life-giving to another? What life giving words were missing from your Christmas? What words of Christmas will you carry throughout your year? May God give you peace to honor everyone's dignity and bring goodness to every person with all the right words. We need to remind our world that the Christmas message is for the whole year, not just Christmas time. For all people even those different than us.

***"It is never the brothers right next to us, but the brothers in the abstract that are easy to love."***  
—Dorothy Day

Peace on earth good will to all is a pro life message from of old. The words can be a pretty sentiment or a daystar for our every utterance. When we see all God's people are part of the divine creation, sharing good will and good words happens. Peace on earth comes when good will is for all.

—Peggy Gerovac

## Prayer Corner



*A Prayer to the God  
Who Fell From Heaven*

*If you had stayed tightfisted in the sky  
and watched us thrash  
with all the patience of a pipe smoker,  
I would pray like a gold bullet aimed at your heart.  
But the story says You cried  
and so heavy was the tear  
you fell with it to earth  
where like a baritone in a bar  
it is never time to go home.  
So you move among us  
Twisting every straight line into Picasso,  
stealing kisses from pinched lips,  
holding our hand in the dark.  
So now when I pray  
I sit and turn my mind like a television knob  
till you are there with your large, open hands  
spreading my life before me like a Sunday tablecloth  
And pulling up a chair yourself  
for by now the secret is out.  
You are home.*

—John Shea

# Catholic Campaign to End the Death Penalty

—an excerpt from “Catholic Trends,” November 19, 2005

**Ending “use of the death penalty** would be one important step away from a culture of death toward building a culture of life,” the U.S. bishops say in a statement approved Nov. 15 during their Washington fall meeting. They say: “In Catholic teaching the state has the recourse to impose the death penalty upon criminals convicted of heinous crimes if this ultimate sanction is the only available means to protect society from a grave threat to human life. However, this right should not be exercised when other ways are available to punish criminals and to protect society.” The bishops recall Pope John Paul II’s teaching that cases are “rare, if not practically nonexistent,” when society could not defend itself from offenders except through capital punishment...

...**“We do not seek to diminish in any way the evil and harm caused by people who commit horrible murders”** in calling for an end to the use of the death penalty, the bishops say. The “family of faith must care for sisters and

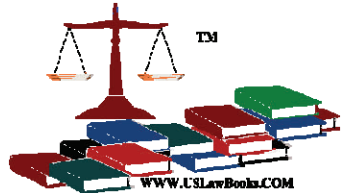
brothers who have been wounded by violence and support them in their loss and search for justice,” the bishops add. However, they say, “standing with families of victims does not compel us to support the use of the death penalty. ... No act, even an execution, can bring back a loved one or heal terrible wounds.” ...

... **Church teaching on use of the death penalty**, “as expressed clearly and authoritatively in the catechism and [the encyclical] ‘The Gospel of Life,’ should not be ignored or dismissed as just one opinion among others,” the bishops say. ...

... **The bishops urge Catholics to join in “a Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty.”**

For more information, go to:

[www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/deathpenalty/](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/deathpenalty/)



## News Notes

—excerpts from “Catholic Trends,” September 10, 2005



**Plan B, the emergency contraceptive also called “the morning-after pill,”** will remain a prescription-only drug for now, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced at the end of August. Barr Laboratories had petitioned the FDA to allow the drug to be sold over the counter, a move the U.S. Catholic bishops’ conference opposed. The FDA announced the start of a 60-day comment period on Plan B policy, saying it was concerned about how to enforce an age limit ban for over-the-counter purchases by those under 17. Gail Quinn, executive director of the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, said, “Clearly claims of ECs’ benefits to women are over-

stated at best, while their potentially lethal risk to human life at its earliest stages remains a grave concern.”

**If the 37 million people currently living in poverty in the United States lived in one state,** the population would be bigger than California’s, which has a population of more than 35 million, said Thomas Chabolla, associate director of programs for the U.S. bishops’ Catholic Campaign for Human Development. He commented after the U.S. Census Bureau’s annual report on income, poverty and health insurance coverage, released Aug. 30, showed that the nation’s poverty rate increased for the fourth year in a row, from 35.9 million people (12.5 percent) in 2003 to 37 million people (12.7 percent) in 2004. Last year, the number of people without health insurance was 45.8 million, an increase of 800,000 over the previous year; the percentage of people without health insurance remained at 15.7 percent.

## Impractical, Immoral

**Violence as a way of achieving justice** is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than to convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible. It leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue. Violence ends by defeating itself. It creates bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers.

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Volume 12

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**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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[www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife](http://www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife)



## Upcoming Events . . .

**Sunday, January 15—March for Life**—The 33rd Annual Mentor Ohio **March for Life** will begin at 2 p.m. *Bundle up your little ones! Signs will be provided!* Park at the Great Lakes Mall (Rt. 20, East of 306) at the east end of Penney's/ Office Max). Meet in the Dillard's/Kaufmann's parking area (along Rt. 20, near Barnes and Noble entrance). At 2 p.m. we will depart eastbound via the Rt. 20 south sidewalk 1 1/4 miles to St. Mary of the Assumption School gymnasium (accommodates 500+). Warm refreshments await your there. Program will begin at 3 p.m. Jim Sedlak, found and executive director of STOPP International, will be the guest speaker. For more information, contact Lake County Right to Life at 440-255-5257 or email at [lcrtl@ncweb.com](mailto:lcrtl@ncweb.com).

**Friday, January 20—Prayer Vigil**—The parish Respect Life Team of St. Hilary Parish, 2750 West Market St., Fairlawn, will sponsor a prayer vigil at 7 p.m. to mark the 33rd anniversary of Roe V. Wade. Fr. Kraker of St. Vincent Parish will be the keynote speaker.

**Friday, January 20—Youth Rally for Life**—Youth from the Greater Cleveland area are invited to voice their concerns on broad-spectrum pro-life issues at the upcoming *24th Annual Youth Rally for Life* to be held at noon on the S.W. Quadrant of Cleveland Public Square. Rally coordinators expect to draw from high schools, colleges and pro-life groups in the area and are inviting speakers to address such subjects which affect the value and existence of human life. For more information about the Rally or an application to speak, please call 216-226-6663.

**Sun.-Mon., January 22-23—March for Life**—St. Gregory the Great Respect Life Committee is sponsoring a bus trip to Washington D.C. to take part in the March for Life to witness on behalf of unborn babies and lobby our representatives in Congress. The bus will leave St. Gregory's at 6:45 am on Sun., Jan. 22 and return on Monday night, Jan. 23 about midnight. If you are unable to go, please consider helping to sponsor a student to go in your place. Please call Rita Krebs at 216-291-0842 or Barbara Latini at 216-382-1910 for more information and/or reservations.



## Websites of Interest . . .

Concerned about the moral implications of certain vaccinations? The Pontifical Academy for Life issued a statement on June 8, 2005. The document is called "Moral Reflections on Vaccines Prepared from Cells Derived from Aborted Human Fetuses." You may find that the Academy did a nice job of explaining the history of the vaccines, the implications of not administering the vaccines and a moral response that concerned Catholics may choose. Check it out:

[www.ncbcenter.org/vaticanresponse.pdf](http://www.ncbcenter.org/vaticanresponse.pdf)

*"God, in fact, is not an inexorable sovereign who condemns the guilty, but a loving Father, whom we must love not out of fear of punishment, but because of his goodness ready to forgive."*

—Pope Benedict XIV, October 19, 2005

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## Eliminating the "Unfit"

—an excerpt from "Babies—Bought, Sold and Traded: A Dark Side of the Consumer Mind-set," *Zenit*, September 17, 2005

Babies suffering from genetic defects are increasingly being eliminated, the Washington Post reported in an in-depth article last April 29. The article explained that according to a survey of nearly 3,000 parents of children with Down syndrome, published in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, health professionals who do prenatal screening commonly give negative depictions to parents of the consequences of bearing a child with this problem.



"In many cases the doctors were insensitive or just plain rude," said the author, Harvard medical student Brian Skotko, whose 24-year-old sister has Down syndrome.

The article explained that changes in past years have greatly improved the situation for those who suffer from Down syndrome. Instead of being relegated to institutions they now tend to live among the general population, and better medical attention has seen a dramatic increase in life expectancy. Babies who survive often live into their 50s, according to the National Down Syndrome Society.

But, according to an article by George Neumayr, in the June issue of the American Spectator, researchers estimate that 80% or more of babies now being diagnosed with Down syndrome in prenatal tests are aborted. As well, a high percentage of fetuses with cystic fibrosis are aborted.

In fact, since the 1960s, the number of Americans with anencephaly and spina bifida has markedly declined. This drop corresponds to the rise of prenatal screening, Neumayr explained.

And doctors who do not warn mothers about their fetuses' defects run the risk of being sued. The article quoted the publication Medical Malpractice Law & Strategy: "[C]ourt rulings across the country are showing that the increased use of genetic testing has substantially exposed physicians' liability for failure to counsel patients about hereditary disorders."

## A Decalogue on Ethics and Environment

Presented by Council for Justice and Peace



- 1) The Bible must dictate the fundamental moral principles of God's plan on the relationship between man and creation.
- 2) It is necessary to develop an ecological conscience of responsibility for creation and humanity.
- 3) The question of the environment entails the whole planet, as it is a collective good.
- 4) It is necessary to confirm the primacy of ethics and of the rights of man over technology.
- 5) Nature must not be regarded as a reality that is divine in itself; therefore, it is not removed from human action.
- 6) The goods of the earth were created by God for the good of all. It is necessary to underline the universal destiny of goods.
- 7) There must be collaboration in the ordered development of the poorest regions.
- 8) International collaboration, the right to development, a healthy environment and peace must be considered in the different legislations.
- 9) It is necessary to adopt more sober lifestyles.
- 10) A spiritual response must be given, which is not the worship of nature.



*I'll give you an example of what hunger is. A child got a piece of bread from a Sister. (He had not eaten for some time.) I saw that child eating the bread slowly, crumb by crumb. I said to him, "I know you are hungry. Why don't you eat the bread up?" The little one answered, "I want it to last longer!" He was afraid that when he finished the bread, his hunger would come back again. And so he ate it crumb by crumb! The other child next to him, was not even eating. I thought that he had finished his bread. But the little one said, "My father is sick. I'm very hungry, but my father is sick, and I think he would love to have this piece of bread." That good little child was willing to go without food to be able to give his father the joy of having a little piece of bread.*

—A Story from Mother Theresa from "Loving Jesus"



### Pro Life Website

by Peggy Gerovac

Have you visited

[www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife](http://www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife) lately?

Pro Life Action Alerts from the USCCB, NCHLA and the Catholic Conference of Ohio are posted as soon as they are received. Often they require immediate action so the website is the best place to be notified.

### New EMAIL Address

Please check your address list.

My email has changed to:

[pmgerovac@clevelandcatholiccharities.org](mailto:pmgerovac@clevelandcatholiccharities.org)

## Project Rachel—What's New?

by Peggy Gerovac



This past quarter the Project Rachel ministers were offered an afternoon of continuing education and reflection. The attendance was low, but two important things emerged. First, the attendees felt re-connected and refreshed in the ministry. Second, the ministers offered some concrete ideas about what the office can do to further the support of women suffering the pain of abortion. In the coming year, I will try to implement many of the opportunities the groups suggested. Implementation will need collaboration, so parishes and parish respect life groups will be contacted soon with the first step. Please keep in your prayers all the women who suffer the pain of abortion, but are unable, as yet, to seek the healing through Project Rachel or other post abortion healing programs.

## AIDS Data Alarm Benedict XVI

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 30, 2005 ([Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org))

Alarmed by AIDS statistics, Benedict XVI appealed to the international community to work for the prevention of the disease and to help those stricken. The Pope's invitation, made on the eve of the U.N. World Day against AIDS, resounded today in St. Peter's Square at the end of the general audience, attended by more than 23,000 people.

The Holy Father called the international community to "renewed commitment in the work of prevention and in solidaristic assistance to those who have been stricken." Raising his voice, Benedict XVI said: "The figures published are alarming!"

The Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers today published the message of its president, Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragán, written for the World Day.

In the message, the cardinal estimates that, as of this year, there were 40.3 million people suffering from the HIV virus, 2.3 million of them under the age of 15. Moreover, this year alone, 4.9 million people contracted the HIV virus, 700,000 of whom are younger than 15. In 2005, 3.1 million people already have died from AIDS; 570,000 of them were under age 15.

"Following closely the example of Christ, the Church has always considered the care of the sick as an integral part of her mission," Benedict XVI said in his appeal. He added: "I encourage, therefore, the numerous initiatives, in particular those promoted by ecclesial communities, to eradicate this sickness and I feel close to AIDS patients and their families, invoking for them the Lord's help and consolation."

This moment in history calls for a spirituality and ethics that will empower us to live in the web of life as sustainers rather than destroyers of the world. This is our generation's great religious adventure, which is absolutely a matter of life or death. No more monumental challenges face those who are led by the Spirit.

—Elizabeth Johnson, CS

## Abandoning life-and-death illusions

"It is time for our nation to abandon the illusion that we can protect life by taking life," wrote the U.S. Catholic Bishops in their November statement, *A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death*. "When the state, in our names and with our taxes, ends a human life despite having non-lethal alternatives, it suggests that society can overcome violence with violence. The use of the death penalty ought to be abandoned not only for what it does to those who are executed, but what it does to all society."

For more information, go to:

[www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/deathpenalty/](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/deathpenalty/)

## Ohio Regulations that Restrict Abortion

**Mandatory waiting period:** Yes. A woman may not receive an abortion until 24 hours after a physician has provided her, in person, with: information about the probable gestational age of the fetus; a description of the proposed abortion procedure and its risks; and the risks of carrying her pregnancy to term.

**Informed consent/state-directed counseling:** Yes. A woman seeking an abortion must receive a state-mandated lecture that explains: the legal responsibilities of the father; the medical assistance she may be entitled to if she carries the pregnancy to term; the name of the physician who will perform the abortion; a list of the private and public agencies providing counseling and alternatives to abortion; and the anatomical and physical characteristics of a fetus at two-week gestational increments.

**Parental notification/consent for minors:** Yes. One parent must provide written consent before a woman under the age of 18 can obtain an abortion. However, the minor may obtain a judicial bypass if she can demonstrate that she is mature enough to make the decision for herself or that an abortion is in her best interests; or if a medical emergency exists that necessitates an immediate abortion to preserve her life.

**Public funding for abortion\*.** No.

**Rights of conscience protection to healthcare providers:** Yes. Individuals and hospitals may refuse to participate in abortion or contraception procedures.

**Abortion clinic regulations:** Yes. Ohio state law requires that all abortions performed after 14 weeks gestation be performed in a hospital, but this law is unconstitutional and unenforceable according to the Supreme Court's decision in *Akron v. Akron Ctr. for Reprod. Health*, which held that a second trimester hospitalization requirement constituted an "undue burden."

**Other:** -Ohio has a "Baby Moses" law, which allows a mother or legal guardian to anonymously leave an infant at a safe place.

\*Federal law mandates that federal and state Medicaid funds must be available for abortion in cases involving rape, incest and life endangerment to the mother.