



FOR LIFE

Volume 12, Issue 2

Second Quarter
2006

In Defending and Promoting Life

“A Primary Value That Must Be Acknowledged”

VATICAN CITY, FEB. 5, 2006 (Zenit.org)

Address by Pope Benedict XVI

Today in Italy Pro-Life Day is being observed, which constitutes a precious occasion of prayer and reflection on the topics of the defense and promotion of human life, especially when it is found in conditions of difficulty. Present in St. Peter's Square are numerous lay faithful who work in this field, some committed in the Pro-Life Movement.

I address my cordial greetings to them, in particular to Cardinal Camillo Ruini, who is accompanying them, and I again express my appreciation for the work they do so that life will always be welcomed as gift and supported with love.

While I invite you to meditate on the message of the Italian bishops, which has as its topic "Respect of Life," I remember our beloved Pope John Paul II, who paid constant attention to these problems.

In particular, I would like to recall the encyclical "Evangelium Vitae," which he published in 1995, and which represents an authentic cornerstone in the Church's teaching on such a current, decisive question.

In framing the moral aspects in a broad spiritual and cultural context, my venerated predecessor confirmed on several occasions that human life is a primary value that must be acknowledged, and that the Gospel calls for it to always be respected.

In the light of my recent encyclical on Christian love, I would like to emphasize the importance of the "service of charity" in supporting the promotion of human life. In this connection, even before undertaking operative initiatives, it is essential to promote an appropriate "attitude to the other": The culture of life is based, in fact, on attention to others, without exclusions or discriminations.

Global Trade and the Common Good

—an excerpt by Andrew Small from "America,"
December 12, 2005, Vol. 193, No. 19



In his encyclical on the Eucharist, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, published in 2003, Pope John Paul II repeated St. Paul's admonition to the early church: "[I]t is 'unworthy' of a Christian community to partake of the Lord's Supper amid division and indifference towards the poor." In the year of the pope's passing, there are positive signs that concern for the poor is alive and well.

At the start of 2005, Americans donated \$1.3 billion to help with relief efforts in areas hit by the tsunami in Asia—a record for an overseas disaster. The public gave \$1.7 billion after hurricane Katrina hit the U.S. Gulf Coast on Aug. 29. At the same time, the United States continued to lead the global fight against H.I.V./AIDS. And the commitment of the Group of Eight leading economies to cancel debt of heavily indebted countries is evidence that the poor are not abandoned.

Despite these positive signs, the poor are getting poorer, and the gap between rich and poor is getting wider. The combined wealth of the 500 richest individuals in the world is greater than that of the 416 million poorest. Ten percent of the globe earns over 50 percent of the world's income, while 40 percent earns just five percent.

Inequity, not prosperity, is what ails us, and no amount of public or private sharing of wealth, however necessary, can realistically overcome that fact.

Voices from a Victim's Family

"No one in our family every wanted to see the killer of our brother and his wife put to death. We felt instinctively that vengeance wouldn't alleviate our grief. We wanted this murderer in prison so he could never hurt another person. But wishing he would suffer and die would only have diminished us and shriveled our own souls. Hatred doesn't heal. Every time the state kills a person, human society moves in the direction of its lowest, most base urges. We don't have to make that choice. Our lawmakers have the capacity to help us abolish the death penalty and along with it, the fantasy that it will make the pain go away."

—Mary Bosco Van Valkenburg for her mother,
Antoinette Bosco, sister Margaret Minier
and brothers Frank and Paul Bosco

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From the Director

As I minister with the Pro Life teaching of the Catholic Church, my eyes are opened to the pain and suffering of many people in our world. I have heard and read about many situations where the sanctity of someone's life has been forgotten. Many have told me stories of lives compromised for another's purpose. I have even heard the pain and sorrow of many a Catholic who is inspired by God's creation, yet in the muck and mess of their own enthusiasm for life, their words and emotions turn from joy and blessing to desperation and anger. Ronald Rohlheiser in his book Forgotten Among the Lilies says, "We live in pain and division. In the world, in the church and within ourselves, there is much anger, hatred and bitterness. It seems ever harder to live at peace with each other, to be calm, to have simple joy within our lives and not to alienate someone just by being." My own attempts at opening minds and hearts can leave me feeling unaccomplished. Yet, I do not want to run to resentment and anger. I want to remember that Jesus' love is what brings life to our world. I want to share that love with others, so that love grows and dignity of the person reigns.

"It helps now and then to step back and take the long view. The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts; it is even beyond our vision"

—Oscar Romero

And so I pray. I spend quiet time in prayer dialogue with God. I share my hopes for our world along with my frustrations about each life that is not lived, ended too early or lived without the dignity God gave them. And I listen to God who loves me, encourages me and helps me see the opportunities I have to share love and life with others. God encourages me to stay in close contact with people who are struggling to uphold life as well as those whose lives are devalued by many in our society. Just a couple of days ago in the midst of a very busy weekend,

my husband and I were asked to sit with a lady who was very ill. It was our joy to be with her as she passed from our world and was birthed into eternal life with Jesus. We were standing at the gates wishing her well and reminding her that she could now be a great intercessor for our lives and our ministry.

"When we cry honest tears, we are flooded with the desire to pray, to forgive, to serve others, to build a just social order, to live more moral lives, to love beyond resentment and bitterness. That is the movement toward reconciliation and joy." (Rohlheiser)

I continue to search for ways to bring all of us and all with whom we minister into greater reconciliation and joy with life. My goal is to carry on, to open minds and hearts to situations where life is compromised in abortion, in poverty, in disability and disease, on death row, in armed conflict, in scientific research where one life is ended to find a cure for another and in diminishing the earth's resources. Yet, I find that opening minds and hearts is not just for the perpetrators in life ending situations. It is a call to every person made in the image and likeness of God to think of another person's dignity in every act of our lives. When we love and honor the other, Jesus' love has fertile ground. I, too, have work to do in my personal quest for life. I respond to these words of Jesus, "But when you pray, go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you." (Mt 6:6) In prayer, I am open to my own shortcomings and my need for God's love and mercy to keep walking this path.

This Lent, I have reflected on the Passion of Jesus Christ through a long traditional prayer of the Church. I offer to you my own personal prayer and reflection in the Pro Life Stations of the Cross. You can find them on the website. It is an insight into my dialogue of prayer and an invitation to your own. May these last weeks of Lent and Holy Week bring you and all those you hold in your heart, love and reconciliation so that an Easter joy may celebrate life.

—Peggy Gerovac



DID YOU KNOW ?

- ✓ Every week, AIDS claims as many lives as American fatalities in the Vietnam War. Since it was discovered, AIDS killed nearly 30 million people—equal to the combined population of Arizona and Texas, and nearly 10 times the number of earthquake fatalities in the last century.
- ✓ By 2020, AIDS will have claimed the lives of at least one-fifth of southern Africa's cultural workers. Food production is just one area in which AIDS threatens to reverse decades of development work in poor communities.
- ✓ The virus that causes AIDS is currently spreading fastest in Russia, where the infection rate grew 257% in just three years.

—Source: World Vision

- ✓ 6,000 children are orphaned by AIDS every day.

—Source: United Nations

Prayer Corner



The fruit of silence is prayer.

The fruit of prayer is faith.

The fruit of faith is love.

The fruit of love is service.

The fruit of service is everlasting peace.

—Mother Theresa

A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death

—excerpt from *Origins*, Nov. 24, 2005, Vol. 35, No. 24

In these reflections we join together to share clearly and apply faithfully Catholic teaching on the death penalty. We reaffirm our common judgment that the use of the death penalty is unnecessary and unjustified in our time and circumstances.

Our nation should forgo the use of the death penalty because:

—The sanction of death violates respect for human life and dignity.

—State-sanctioned killing in our names diminishes all of us.

—Its application is deeply flawed and can be irreversibly wrong, is prone to errors and is biased by factors such as race, the quality of legal representation and where the crime was committed.

—We have other ways to punish criminals and protect society. The sanction of death when it is not necessary to protect society undermines respect for human life and dignity.

We renew our common conviction that it is time for our nation to abandon the illusion that we can protect life by



taking life. We encourage reflection and call for common action in the Catholic community and among all men and women of good will to end the use of the death penalty in our land. Ending the death penalty would be one important step away from a culture of death toward building a culture of life.

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 that are more respectful of human life. In these pastoral reflections we do not offer new teaching or doctrine but rather hope to help Catholics better understand and apply this teaching in our own time and situation.

"Our witness to respect for life shines most brightly when we demand respect for each and every human life, including the lives of those who fail to show that respect for others. The antidote to violence is love, not more violence."

—USCCB, "Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics" (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1998), No. 22



Droplets

"Water is the blue soul of the planet."

—Pedro Arrojo Aquado

- ◆ Under the oceans are mountains higher than Mount Everest, canyons deeper than the Grand Canyon, and the largest living structure on Earth—Australia's Great Barrier Reef.
- ◆ One billion people worldwide do not have any water within a 15 minute walk of their homes.
- ◆ Every eight seconds, a child dies from contaminated water.
- ◆ Agriculture accounts for over 80 percent of world water consumption.
- ◆ It takes 2,500 gallons of water to produce a pound of beef.
- ◆ Through conservation, New York City, in the 1990's, reduced its water use by 14 percent, Seattle by 20 percent.
- ◆ Freshwater animals are disappearing 5 times faster than land animals.
- ◆ One mature tree next to a stream or lake can filter as much as 200 pounds of nitrate runoff per year.

—www.waterspirit.org

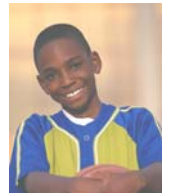
"Throughout the history of literature, the guy who poisons the well has been the worse of all villains."

—Anonymous

God's Expression

The human person is the clearest reflection of God's presence in the world; all of the Church's work in pursuit of both justice and peace is designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person. For each person not only reflects God, but is the expression of God's creative work and the meaning of Christ's redemptive ministry.

The Challenge of Peace, #15



Volume 12

Issue 2

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.

Pro Life Office

7911 Detroit Avenue

Cleveland, OH 44102

(216) 334-2965

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Upcoming Events . . .

Saturday, April 29, 2006—L'Arche Cleveland Annual Reverse Raffle held at Holy Trinity, 24821 Columbus Rd., Bedford Hts. beginning at 7:30 p.m. Main Raffle Prize \$2,000; \$40 for Dinner & Main Ticket; \$25, dinner only. Only 200 tickets will be sold. Call Tim or Rosemary at 216-721-2614.

Saturday, May 13, 2006—Mother's Day Luncheon & Silent Auction sponsored by Pregnancy Care will be held at St. Joseph's Family Center, 610 West Exchange St., Akron. Tickets are \$25 per person. Call (330) 253-4071 for more information.

WANTED:

The Pro Life Office is looking for a volunteer who is committed to life issues for assistance with the website. This will involve regular review of current and prospective offerings available. It is important that the website remain current with Catholic Teaching. Internet savvy needed but website design expertise not required.



"He made heaven hinge on the way we act toward him and in his disguise of commonplace, frail, ordinary humanity."

—"Walk This Way"
U.S. Catholic, November 2005

**Pro Life Office
Catholic Charities
Parish and Community Ministries
7911 Detroit Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44102**



Wish List . . .

The Michael Abdenour House and Gurnick Place provide housing for approx. 20 AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland clients. During their stay, residents obtain additional support from Taskforce case managers. The Taskforce depends on support and generosity of "friends" to help meet the needs of our clients. Some ways you can help are:

Personal Client Needs (unused and packaged)

- Shampoo, conditioners, combs, brushes, toothbrushes, dental floss, mouthwash, feminine hygiene supplies, etc.
- Shaving cream, disposable razors, aftershave, etc.
- Bathrobes, house shoes, bed linens (for twin only), pillows, blankets, bedspreads, quilts, comforters, etc.

Household Furnishings and Supplies (new or nearly new)

- Upright freezer, televisions, sofas, chairs, etc.
- Flashlights

For additional info, please contact Leon Hall at (216) 621-0766, ext. 227.

Alternaterm Pregnancy Center, (2026 Lee Rd., Cleveland Hts., 44118), a ministry to women in crisis pregnancies, is currently in need of the following items:

- TV/VCR or DVD Combo; cabinet or display case
- Dorm-size refrigerator; two couches
- Digital camera or new Polaroid camera
- \$5 or \$10 gift cards to various retailers
- Gift items for women or men

For further information, call 216-371-4848.

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Service and Care for Women and Unborn Children

—U.S. Bishops' New Pastoral Plan
for Pro-Life Activities, Nov. 20, 1975



Respect for human life motivates individuals and groups to reach out to those with special needs. Programs of service and care should be available to provide women with alternate options to abortion. Specifically, these programs should include:

—adequate education and material sustenance for women so that they may choose motherhood responsibly and freely in accord with a basic commitment to the sanctity of life;

—nutritional, prenatal, childbirth and postnatal care for the mother, and nutritional and pediatric care for the child throughout the first year of life;

—intensified scientific investigation into the causes and cures of maternal disease and/or fetal abnormality;

—continual development of genetic counseling and gene therapy centers and neo-natal intensive care facilities;

—extension of adoption and foster care facilities to those who need them;

Pregnancy counseling centers that provide advice, encouragement and support for every woman who faces difficulties related to pregnancy;

—counseling services and opportunities for continuation of education for unwed mothers;

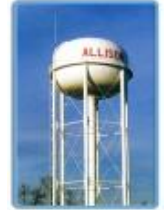
—special understanding, encouragement and support for victims of rape;

—continued efforts to remove the social stigma that is visited on the woman who is pregnant out of wedlock and the child.

Many of these services have been and will continue to be provided by Church-sponsored health care and social service agencies, involving the dedicated efforts of professionals and volunteers. Cooperation with other private agencies and increased support in the quest for government assistance in many of these areas are further extensions of the long-range effort.

The Ecological Crisis and Human Ecology: A Moral Problem

—excerpt from "The Essential Moral Handbook—A Guide to Catholic Living"



It is only in recent years that we have rediscovered the delicate and intricate link that exists between all facets of Creation. We now realize that one cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying attention to the consequences of such an interference in so many other areas, and on the impact of any interference on the well-being of future generations (*The Ecological Crisis* §6). "The dominion granted by the Creator over the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be separated from respect for moral obligations, including those toward generations to come: (CCC §2456). Disrespect for the environment reveals an underlying disrespect for life, including human life. Pope John Paul II makes this point very forcefully, calling our attention to interests in production that cause environmental damage, disregard for the dignity and health of workers, and pollution on such a scale that reveals a genuine contempt for our fellow men and women (*The Ecological Crisis*, §7). In other words, ecology is inseparably connected to justice. Right relationships with our environment mean right relationships with our fellow human beings, and respect for human life entails a respect for all of Creation.

Life Lessons



The Life Lessons column is presented to provide further Prayer & Reflection on the current issue of "For Life." Each quarter questions and thoughts for reflection are presented for use in your private prayer and reflection, for discussion within your

family, in a group of peers, with another person concerned with life issues or even in your parish groups. You may be amazed at the fruits of reflection.

1. What did you read in "For Life" that surprised you?
2. How have you been led to a broader appreciation of life?
3. What Gospel story comes to mind as you hear Pope Benedict's vision for Pro Life?

New EMAIL Address

Please check your address list.
My email has changed to:

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