



For Life

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Coping with devastation of poor prenatal diagnosis

—excerpts from *Our Sunday Visitor*, December 5, 2010

Generally, when a poor diagnosis is confirmed, the parents are told they still have time to abort the baby, and it is often suggested that abortion would be the best course of action.

Catholic parents may look to the Church for information and pastoral care as they carry their babies to term, but such care is not always forthcoming, said Monica Rafie, the founder of Be Not Afraid (www.benotafraid.net), which offers online support and resources for people facing a poor prenatal diagnosis.

BeNotAfraid.net, which offers support to couples and families who have had poor prenatal diagnoses and encourages them to carry their infants to term, or at least as long as possible.

Be Not Afraid offers advice on pastoral care, suggesting that ministers listen first, help parents reconnect with their baby, who is alive in the womb; encourage them to slow down; remind them that they are not alone; and encourage them to find hope.

Former Colombian Hostage held for six years, Ingrid Betancourt

—excerpt from *Our Sunday Visitor*
Nov. 28, 2010

I came to understand that dignity is related to freedom. You can take away the dignity of a person by taking away his freedom. And when you do that, you can turn that person into an animal or an object. We're fragile. The way we see ourselves is transformed by the way other people treat us.

And when people treat us like animals, when they take away our freedom and treat us as if we have no dignity, it's a fight not to see what they see. It's a fight not to act according to how you're being treated. But we have to fight. And the only way to do that is to remember who you are—that who you are is not about what you have or how you're dressed or how you smell, but that you are a human person, and that you have a soul.

Holy See Decries Use of Children as Soldiers Urges UN to Work With Church to Protect Youth



NEW YORK, OCT. 19, 2010 (Zenit.org) - The Holy See is calling for greater protection for children, especially against those who enslave youth as soldiers.

Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, permanent observer of the Holy See at the United Nations noted that "in the world today children and young adolescents continue to be the victims of grave violations in situations of conflict around the globe." He added, "It is deplorable that the climate of impunity with respect to perpetrators seems to increase."

The archbishop made particular mention of "the fact that children and young adolescents have become

more vulnerable in those situations where new tactics of war are being implemented."

"This has been called one of the worst kinds of slavery, yet it continues to this day: children—at a tender age when they should be learning how to love and respect their neighbors—are being used as soldiers," he lamented.

"Their estimated number runs as high as 250,000 worldwide," Archbishop Chullikatt stated.

"These children and young adolescents are forced to kill their neighbors, sometimes even their parents, siblings and friends," he observed. "This is despicable, but this is also preventable."

"The Catholic Church has been a constant partner of the United Nations in combating the use of children as combatants around the world, and through its various structures operating in many conflict zones, she is actively engaged in taking care of the victims of such violence," the prelate noted.

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From the Director

Recently during the Vigil for Nascent Life at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Pope Benedict said a few words that really struck me. They actually came at the end of a paragraph in the middle of his address. In other words, they were not given great emphasis. Yet this one sentence spoke volumes to me. Benedict has the gift of word that interests a writer like me and inspires a spiritual and intellectual seeker like me.

He said, "Cultural trends exist that seek to **anaesthetize consciences** with spurious arguments." The highlight was added for my emphasis. He does not say that people are working diligently to change the hearts and minds of individuals to actively and intellectually alter their understanding of the world. No. He says that the ways of the world are working to lull into sleep a deep and formative piece of ourselves. In choosing the word *anaesthetize*, he is not saying that we will actively go against what we know is right and good. Instead he says we just won't care. Our conscience will be asleep at the wheel. When moral decisions arise, we won't wake up to realize that what we know deep within ourselves to be right or wrong is being violated. Passive acceptance will become our norm.

In a culture of hyper-sensation that comes at us constantly in the forms of loud, repetitive sounds, visual stimulation through media and excessive focus on the material world, we may allow part of the core of our being to be suppressed and ignored. At Christmas time we hear messages like "if he really loves me, he will buy me diamonds and we will be happy."

Enough ingesting of this type of message may deafen our ears and our hearts to messages like "lives are being destroyed because they are a burden" or "poverty can be solved if we eliminate individuals who don't produce up to standard." This will especially be a problem when more "acceptable" words are chosen. The same messages could sound like "Having a child with a disability is too difficult for some people to accept" or "We need to seek ways of reducing the number of children born into poverty."

An example of this process of lulling us into submission is the evolution of media reports regarding adult and embryonic stem cell research. When this research began, reports made the distinction very clear. Initially we listened to a report or read an article and we clearly knew when they

were talking about embryo cells and when they were speaking of adult cells. Over time this has changed. Now headlines normally use only the words "stem cell." Because I was alerted, I learned and my conscience was formed; I now dig deeper when receiving information. I look for clues about what type of research is being discussed. I am learning with an awakened alert conscience.

There are times when I too have let my conscience be anaesthetized, sometimes in a healthy way to keep myself from being overwhelmed by the problems of the world. I have been lulled negatively, also not realizing wrongs in the world. Because of the circumstances of life, I have to be diligent in learning and understanding my ability to prevent an atrophied conscience. I am grateful for all those who assist me in my own formation so that I know truth and am not blinded by untrue, *spurious* notions. Finally, I pray so that God's grace will keep me open and alert for truth and goodness and prevent my human condition from being anaesthetized in false claims when I have an opportunity to make a difference.

—Peggy Gerovac

Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski underlines need for human health care for all

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 17, 2010 (Zenit.org)- Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski is underlining the need for human health care for all, following the principles outlined in "Caritas in Veritate."

The president of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Ministry said in a press conference Monday that "the present inequalities in health care call for undertaking courageous action without delay."

Archbishop Zimowski said that it is increasingly difficult to reconcile "economic, scientific and technical progress with the persistent inequality of access to health services, which is a fundamental human right."

He also lamented the "continuous inequalities between the health systems of rich countries and those of developing countries and, worse still, of those called underdeveloped."

The prelate pointed out how even in rich countries there are also "great differences in access to health care."

"Many poor people and immigrants do not have access to medicine and other technologies to save lives, because of so-called inaccessible or scarce existing health infrastructures in the respective nations," he continued.

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Pope's Words at Prayer Vigil for Unborn Life

VATICAN CITY, DEC. 3, 2010 (Zenit.org)

- ❖ The Incarnation reveals to us, with intense light and in a surprising way, that every human life has a very lofty and incomparable dignity
- ❖ We are part of this world, tied to the possibilities and limitations of our material condition, while at the same time we are open to an infinite horizon, able to converse with God and to welcome him within us.
- ❖ God loves us deeply, totally and without making distinctions. He calls us to friendship with him, he makes us part of a reality beyond every imagination and every thought and word: his divine life itself.
- ❖ With feeling and gratitude, let us be aware of the value of every human person's incomparable dignity and of our great responsibility to all.
- ❖ [Man] is entitled not to be treated as an object to be possessed or a thing to be manipulated at will, and not to be exploited as a means for the benefit of others and their interests.
- ❖ Love for all, moreover, if it is sincere, tends spontaneously to become preferential attention to the weakest and poorest.
- ❖ With regard to the embryo in the mother's womb, science itself highlights its autonomy, its capacity for interaction with the mother, the coordination of biological processes, the continuity of development, the growing complexity of the organism.
- ❖ Unfortunately, even after birth, the lives of children continue to be exposed to neglect, hunger, poverty, disease, abuse, violence and exploitation. The many violations of their rights sorrowfully wound the conscience of every person of good will.
- ❖ I urge politicians, leaders of the economy and of social communications to do everything in their power to promote a culture ever respectful of human life, to obtain favourable conditions and support networks for the acceptance and development of life.
- ❖ Let us entrust our prayers and our commitment to unborn life to the Virgin Mary, who welcomed the Son of God made man with her faith, with her maternal womb, with her attentive care, with her nurturing support, vibrant with love.

"It is a fundamental inversion of values, according to Catholic teaching when laws and policies place national interests and security before human dignity."

—Archbishop Brendan O'Brien, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' Commission for Justice and Peace

When a baby becomes a commodity



—excerpt from *Our Sunday Visitor*
Nov. 21, 2010

As if we needed another example of the bizarre, "Brave New World" times we're living in comes this story from Canada: A couple who conceived a child using a surrogate decided to abort the baby once they learned the child would likely be born with Down syndrome. The surrogate initially resisted ending the pregnancy, raising several messy questions about contractual obligations in such agreements, but eventually consented to the abortion.

According to the fertility doctor in the case, the couple and the surrogate mother had never considered the possibility of there being a problem with the pregnancy, adding that the British Columbia couple had "come on a long journey before commissioning the surrogacy, [but] all they were thinking about was success."

Commissioning ... contracts ... these words used to be associated more with business rather than babies. But sadly, this story does not come as a surprise—the more we take the creation of human life out of god's hands and into our own, the colder and more businesslike the process becomes. But it's still a disgusting display of the commodification of human life.

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For Life is a quarterly publication of the Pro Life Office, Catholic Charities, 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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Assisted Suicide: Dignified?

Assisted suicide has become an increasingly controversial issue as advocates insist it is a humane, dignified way to die. Efforts to turn public opinion in favor of assisted suicide include an appeal to patient autonomy and freedom of choice. Opponents of assisted suicide are criticized for lacking compassion when they try to prevent an elderly, disabled or terminally ill person from deciding to end his or her suffering through suicide.

The choice to end one's life, however, is not an exercise of freedom; it is ultimately a manifestation of loss and despair. The desire to end a painful health condition is one reason for a suicidal tendency, but there are ways to eliminate pain without killing the patient. By far, the most common reason for a suicidal tendency is one's self-perception as a burden, as not worthy of someone else's time or care. Something is very wrong when people, out of feelings of guilt, fear, or sadness, begin to define their worth and sense of self only in terms of their "usefulness" to others.

—*Hope: A Vital Force More Powerful Than Death*,
Kimberly Baker is a staff assistant for the
Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities,
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
October 29, 2010

EVENTS

Saturday, January 22, 2011

Day of Penance for Violations to the Dignity of the Human Person—9:00 a.m. Mass at Mary Queen of the Apostles, 6455 Engle Rd., Brook Park. Call 216-433-1440 for more info.



Monday, January 24, 2011

March for Life in Washington, D.C.

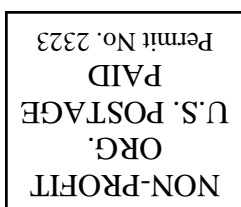
St. Ladislav in Westlake, Ohio, is again sponsoring a bus trip to Washington D.C. to bring our prayers and witness to the March for Life, an annual event that is a peaceful protest against the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. Tens of thousands of pro-life Americans attend each year. Please join us!

Cost is \$60 per person. No overnight stay. For information and reservations, call Bob Bernath at 440-250-0514.

Other busses leaving for March for Life in Washington:

Westside bus: St. John Bosco, leaves Sunday night, January 23 at 9 p.m. Call Frank 216-362-6091

Eastside bus: Immaculate Conception, leaves Sunday Night at 10 p.m. Call Chuck 440-257-7835



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What Human Trafficking Looks Like

—excerpted from: <http://www.verite.org/WellMade/>

RICARDO was a cattle herder in his mid-thirties from a remote region of Patagonia, Chile. He heard about how you could earn good money working as a herder in the U.S.

Bait: A recruiter in Santiago, Chile offered Ricardo a cattle herding job in the US at \$1300-\$1500/month plus benefits with travel expenses covered by the employer. Ricardo paid the \$1500 recruitment fee by borrowing from family members.

Switch: At the Santiago airport just prior to boarding, the recruiter made Ricardo pay an additional recruiting fee and sign a contract listing his salary as \$800 per month.

Abuse: Up to \$300 per month was deducted for food, insurance, telephone use, and travel. Ricardo was alone in the desert for three-month stretches working 24/7. Ricardo's passport and visa were held by his employer, making him a virtual prisoner. Ricardo's income was deposited into a bank account; his boss was the only one with access.

Piling on the Debt: Ricardo's employer deducted for travel expenses and living accommodations.

Ricardo worked 17 hours a day, 7 days a week and was on call around the clock. Only through the assistance of a legal advocate was Ricardo able to obtain a T visa. He had traveled 6,9333 miles in his journey of abuse.

Key Changes to National Catholic Campaign for Human Development

—*Our Sunday Visitor*, November 14, 2010

- A rewritten pre-application, application and grant agreement enumerating specific positions that exclude groups from receiving funding, such as support of same-sex marriage or involvement in pro-choice advocacy efforts.
- An ongoing consulting relationship with a moral theologian and the establishment of an independent review board, consisting of four to six members, who will offer ethical guidance on funding choices.
- The establishment of a new staff position to focus specifically on the Catholic identity of CCHD.
- A preference for grant applicants who have some Catholic involvement in their programs.
- A more direct link between CCHD and the other priorities of the bishops' conference, including increased collaboration in the areas of pro-life activities, cultural diversity, family life and others.
- Stronger diocesan partnerships and more training and assistance for local diocesan CCHD directors.

Ethical Stem Cell Research Succeeds

—by David Prentice, PhD
excerpt from *Ethics & Medics*, Dec. 2010
Vol. 35, No. 12

Induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells have become the hope of the scientific world in the last few years. Dr. Shinya Yamanaka was the first to generate iPS cells, publishing a seminal paper in August 2006 that showed that the addition of four genes could convert a normal mouse skin cell to an embryonic-like stem cell. Barely a year later, Yamanaka, as well as James Thomson, showed that the same "reprogramming" could be accomplished with human cells.

This rapidly advancing science has solved the central ethical dilemma about stem cells. iPS cells behave like embryonic stem cells but are created without the use

of embryos, eggs, or cloning technology. Thus, the iPS cell technique allows scientists to access pluripotent stem cells while respecting human life. Additionally, iPS cells have several advantages over embryonic stem cells—iPS cells are easier and cheaper to make than embryonic stem cells, and they can be made directly from almost any tissue from any person. Disease-specific iPS cells have already been made from individual patients, allowing the disease to be studied in culture and potentially providing a tissue match, if needed, for the patient from whom the original cells were taken.

Because of its ease and utility, iPS cell research has outpaced the antiquated embryonic stem cell research, while adult stem cells continue to be used to treat actual patients. Ethical stem cell science flourishes.

Cardinal Turkson: Today's Wars Won't Bring Future Peace

Justice, Peace Council President Stresses Role of Religions in Reconciliation

BERLIN, Germany, NOV. 29, 2010 (Zenit.org).- The wars of today will not lead to the peace of tomorrow, says the president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

"It is becoming increasingly clear, especially in today's world, how a seemingly 'small' and 'local' conflict can trigger 'global' consequences," the prelate observed.

He noted that "war and peace originate in the heart of man, and it's impossible to have a divided heart."

"So, war, to some extent, affects everyone, and peace concerns everyone," the cardinal stated.

Sometimes, he acknowledged, "it seems that we have to accept conflict as a dimension at every level, the personal and interpersonal as well as on the local and global."

"But we know that this is not true," Cardinal Turkson added. "Certainly, man may experience an inner battle, but conflict cannot be a philosophy of life, or the hermeneutical key of reality."

He continued: "Jesus brought a change, he renewed everything; he made God's grace visible in order to bring peace into the history of every human being and of all humanity."

"Man is not called to hate himself and his neighbor but to love his neighbor as himself."

The prelate affirmed that "religion in general and the great religions represent an extraordinary factor of unity and peace for peoples."

"This desire and aspiration are not mere wishes," he said. "They must be the duty of all towards all: to desire and to seek after peace." "Starting today, in a world not yet at peace, all men of good will, especially Christians, are called to be peacemakers, to cultivate dialogue and the meeting of civilizations, to witness the love of God's children precisely by yearning for peace for the future generations," the prelate said. "In this way," he concluded, "the love of God, who renews everything, can become incarnate and transform the present and the future of mankind, while waiting for the coming of Jesus Christ, true love and true peace."

I Don't Want the Death Penalty for Anyone

Spokesman Reflects on Church's Stance on Punishment

ROME, OCT. 4, 2010 (Zenit.org).- The director of the Vatican press office says he is against recourse to the death penalty, and wants capital punishment for no one anywhere in the world.

This was the affirmation made by Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, as he offered his personal reflection on the Church's opposition to current recourse to capital punishment.

"I don't want it in China, or in Iran, or in the United States, or in India, or in Indonesia or in Saudi Arabia—nowhere in the world," he asserted during the most recent episode of Vatican Television's "Octava Dies."

"I don't want it by stoning, or by shooting, or by decapitation, or by hanging, or by the electric chair, or by lethal injection," he continued. "I don't want it painful or painless. I don't want it in public or in secret."

"I don't want it for women, or for men; for the handicapped or for the healthy. I don't want it for civilians or military men, I don't want it in peace or in war. I don't want it for someone who might be innocent, but I don't want it for confessed criminals either. I don't want it for homosexuals. I don't want it for adulterers. I don't want it for anyone."

"I don't even want it for murderers, for the Mafiosi, for traitors or for tyrants," Father Lombardi added. "I don't want it out of vengeance, or to free ourselves from troublesome and expensive prisoners, not even for alleged mercy."

"Because," he said, "I seek a greater justice. And it is good to walk on this path to increasingly affirm, in favor of everyone, the dignity of the person and of human life, of which we are not the ones to dispose."

The Vatican spokesman referenced the Catechism of the Catholic Church, saying that cases in which the death penalty is the only means to protect human lives and public order are practically non-existent.

"Let us make [the cases] non-existent," he said. "It's better."

"Africa is particularly rich in human and natural resources, yet many of our people are still left to wallow in poverty and misery, wars and conflicts, crisis and chaos," the bishops said.

—U. S. Catholic, Nov. 2010