



For Life

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Third Quarter
2010

Bishop Reflects on Death Penalty Following Execution

It wasn't easy for Bishop R. Daniel Conlon to watch Michael Beuke lie strapped down on the gurney in the Lucasville death chamber last week. "I was feeling a great sadness. A sadness for the tragic loss of life 27 years ago and the loss of life that day," said Conlon, bishop of the Steubenville Catholic Diocese.

Beuke was executed Thursday at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility at Lucasville for the 1983 murder of Robert Craig and the shooting of two other men during a three-week string of shootings in the Cincinnati area.

While on the gurney in the death chamber, Beuke delivered the longest final statement on record in the state, according to the AP. "Michael was actually praying the Rosary. He prayed from the Apostles' Creed through the Glorious Mysteries to the concluding prayer," Conlon said.

"I am a Catholic and a Catholic priest, so I subscribe to the teachings of the Catholic Church. The church acknowledges the right of the state to punish people for their crimes, even punishment by death," observed Conlon. "But even that ultimate punishment can only be used as a last resort if the state feels it can't protect others. My sense is there are virtually no such situations existing in the state of Ohio. In accord with the teaching of our church, the death penalty should virtually never be imposed.

"As bishops, our role as teachers is to put forth the teachings of the church on this matter to our people. If we are speaking to elected officials on this matter or other moral issues, we do discuss the church's teaching," Conlon continued. "As far as I know, since I have been bishop there have been no legislative proposals in Ohio to modify the statutes pertaining to capital punishment ... we as bishops would be very active in supporting measures to end the death penalty."

"What Michael did 27 years ago was to take the place of God by ending someone's life. Capital punishment, in effect, does the same thing."

—by Dave Gossett
excerpts from *The Intelligencer*, May 18, 2010

Bishop Testifies Before Commission to Study Death Penalty

<http://www.catholicchurchnh.org/public-issues/>

A Consistent Ethic of Life Thought



All life is sacred, and all life-issues are intimately woven together. A person cannot truly respect the life of one human being if he or she does not respect the lives of all. One who opposes the killing of unborn children through abortion or the destruction of embryos but supports the killing of a man on death row, for instance, is not really pro-life. Likewise, one who is opposed to capital punishment yet supports the destruction of human embryos for stem cell research does not really respect life. The list goes on. How can one be pro-life, yet support an unjust war that has resulted in the deaths of many people or support environmental policies that cause human suffering and the deaths of many of earth's creatures? There is no artificial dividing line. The fabric of life extends to all.

by W. Malcolm Byrnes
—excerpt from *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly*, Summer 2009, Vol. 9, No. 2

'Mary the Survivor' Of Nagasaki Visits Nonproliferation Conference

"I'm traveling with the statue of Mary, the survivor of the atomic bomb of Nagasaki," said Archbishop Joseph Mitsuki Takami of Nagasaki, Japan, before unlocking a security case and gently revealing its contents, a statue remnant, showing the ruined visage of Mary. "The message of this Mary is to tell the people of the world the absurdity and foolishness of war, militarization and nuclear weapons," the archbishop told *America*. "Mary is inviting us to work for peace."

(Listen to the interview at www.americamagazine.org.)

—excerpt from *America*, May 17, 2010

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From the Director

Often people tell me it's hard to find someone who can speak well to all the issues of pro life. I wonder why that is difficult. Maybe we become focused on the issues instead of the person. Our core Catholic teaching is about the dignity of the person. Any teaching on an issue comes from the basic tenet of our faith tradition that every person is made in the image and likeness of God and has basic rights to support this dignity.

While I do accept the compliments of people who appreciate how the Pro Life Office works very hard to speak always of human dignity and show the relationship of life issues, it is bothersome that this distinction is not clearly heard. This is basic Catholic Social Teaching and yet so many cannot convey it to others.

Recently, I had a fantastic experience of people respecting human dignity in varied ways. I speak about consistent ethic of life; but during a recent visit to the Akron Catholic Worker homes and Peter Maurin Center, I saw the community living it. As the day unfolded, no one spoke to me of theology or plans to address life issues. I just saw people loving and helping people.

In this neighborhood, which spoke loudly of poverty and struggle, the houses identified by their Catholic Worker signs were a peaceful welcome. They were a living sign of solidarity. Then I noticed a pro life bumper sticker on the car parked in front of me. Of course, many times when I go to pro life events I see these stickers, but I was a little surprised (and impressed) here.

As the day progressed, I witnessed people struggling with issues and the Catholic Worker community response. Some of the guests were immigrants with children who spoke to me of the "Call to Family, Community, and Participation" as I saw them trying to learn English and helping out with the home through

Moral Convictions

During the courtroom testimony, the woman explains that, though her child died in her arms, this was her way of respecting the child's dignity. The witness makes clear, however, that she is not anti-abortion, that it was just the right decision to make. After hearing this testimony, the assistant district attorney, Connie Rubirosa, suddenly rethinks her take-no-prisoners pro-choice position. She is now asking where ... my privacy ends and where another life's dignity begins.

—by Emily Brennan

Excerpt from an interview with the producer of "Law and Order," *America*, February 22, 2010

cooking and gardening. Another mother had lived in one of the women's homes during her recent pregnancy and after the birth. The father lived in a men's house up the street. This was a huge blessing for the whole community and active support of the unborn. Soon after the baby was born the family wanted to live together as a family, so they moved to an apartment of their own.

At the Peter Maurin Center lunch, I was able to see the Catholic Worker outreach ministry. I was welcomed by guests, board members and more volunteers. I heard from a retired priest who comes often to listen to the guests. He said he enjoys the hospitality of this center and does a little preaching "when the door is open." I met some board members who spoke to me about living their Catholic faith through their ministry and being blessed with joy by living as Jesus taught.

Two children and a volunteer returned from a long-term care facility for poor elderly and disabled down the street. They told us about how one of the girls had taken a baby's outfit with her for the visit. They met a resident who had a new grandchild but had no money for a gift. So the children gave her the outfit. The children were respecting the baby, the elderly, the disabled and the poor in their visit and their gift.

As I drove back to Cleveland that day, I thought of all the lovely people I met at the Catholic Worker. Many of the issues I saw you will read about in this issue of *For Life*. God bless all of you who live respecting life and helping our world address people who are the very gift of God, *Life!*

—Peggy Gerovac

Prayer Corner

Prayer for Life

God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, gaze upon our African American community as we pray for an end to violence and a halt to abortion among us. Touch our minds and hearts, and fix them on life and love. Turn us to seek the wisdom of our ancestors.

Jesus the Giver of life, make us a People for life.

Bless us, so that we may pass on a legacy of your life and grace. Strengthen us to sacrifice ourselves for each other. Shower us with your grace and mercy so that we may be sources of light and hope to those less fortunate among us.

Jesus the Giver of life, make us a People for life.

Bless those who are sick, broken, lonely and forgotten. Bring us all to your everlasting arms at the end of our journey with a clean heart, so that we may rest in praise and thanksgiving, joined to all who have gone before us. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen! Amen! Hallelujah! Amen!

—Composed by James Paul Newson, Therese Wilson Favors and Fr. Glenn D. Parker, CSSR

National Black Catholic Apostolate for Life

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When We Say “No” to Assisted Suicide, We Are Choosing Life

Choosing death by one’s own hand contradicts our deepest identify as sons and daughters of God. Such an action also conveys a tragic message to our family and friends—that we reject their genuine love and our solidarity with them.

Above and beyond what civil laws may say, we Christians are ultimately responsible to God our Creator. As a Church, we definitively say “no” to assisted suicide because we say “yes” to life—from our first moment of conception until our last natural breath. Suicide in any form prevents us from fulfilling the plan God intended for us when we were given life.

Euthanasia, or so-called “mercy killing,” may at first sound like an appealing form of death because it proposes to eliminate all suffering. Yet it is not at all what it seems! By definition, euthanasia is any action that of itself and by intention causes death so as to relieve suffering. As Catholics we believe euthanasia is morally wrong because it is the destruction of life. It also opens the door to other potential crimes against life, especially against those who are chronically ill or disabled. Euthanasia is unnecessary as well as wrong because suffering and pain can be relieved in many morally acceptable ways.

—excerpt from

“Living & Dying According to the Voice of Faith”
A Pastoral Letter
to the Catholics of the State of Michigan

Rosary Goes to Death Row UK Charities Sending Booklets to Zambia

LONDON, APRIL 23, 2010 (Zenit.org).-
Zambian prisoners, including those on death row, will be able to learn to pray the rosary, as the result of an initiative from two United Kingdom charities. The U.K. office of Aid to the Church in Need and the rosary charity Crown of Thorns, will be sending some 1,600 rosary booklets to Kamfinsa State Prison and Kabwe Maximum Security Prison.

Lisa de Quay, chief executive of Crown of Thorns, explained to Aid to the Church in Need that contact with the prisoners probably initiated with a visiting chaplain who distributed prayer cards explaining the rosary. She said that letters from inmates will reflect “the great joy of contact, of being accepted, and of finding God.”



More people die from unsafe water than from all forms of violence, including war,” the U.N. said in marking World Water Day on May 22. “These deaths are an affront to our common humanity, and undermine the efforts of many countries to achieve their development potential.”

Pontiff Calls for Progress on Nuclear Disarmament

Appeals to Review of Non-Proliferation Treaty

VATICAN CITY, MAY 5, 2010 (Zenit.org).- Benedict XVI made an appeal to the world today to continue on the path toward a world free of nuclear arms. “The process toward a concerted and secure disarmament is closely connected with the full and solicitous fulfillment of international commitments,” the Pontiff stated. “Peace, in fact, rests on trust and on respect of assumed obligations, and not only on the balance of forces.

“With this spirit, I encourage initiatives that pursue a progressive disarmament and the creation of areas free of nuclear arms, in the prospect of their complete elimination from the planet.”

“I exhort, finally, all the participants in the New York meeting to surmount the conditionings of history and to knit patiently the political and economic fabric of peace, to help integral human development and the authentic aspirations of peoples,” he concluded.

Young girl in Chad makes her way home with water for the family. Fetching water places huge demands on their time and often limits girls’ exposure to schooling.



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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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WISH LIST

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Below is a list of needs that can also be found on our website at www.holyfamilyhome.com. Personal items such as food and medical supplies must be unopened and not expired.

- Large and XL adult disposable briefs with tabs; hand lotion
 - Plumbing supplies; office furniture; AA, AAA and D batteries
 - Giant Eagle gift cards; Ensure; Boost; canned foods
 - Ladies' nightgowns; bite size candy in bulk; office supplies
- Call 440-888-7722 if you can assist.

Birthright

Birthright is an emergency pregnancy support service available to help girls or women, single or married, regardless of age or income. We are a non-profit, interdenominational organization. All of our services are free, personal and confidential.

You can volunteer. Birthright chapters across the nation have always relied on the dedication and commitment of volunteers. There are various areas in our chapter where your time and talents can be utilized and would be much appreciated. We'll be happy to talk with you about how you can help! Please call 216-228-5998.

www.birthright.com

EVENTS

MP9K—A Race for Maggie's Place

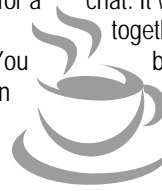
Sunday, Sept. 19, 2010, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo at 8:17 a.m. All proceeds go to Maggie's Place. Prizes; refreshments; entertainment. For more info, go to www.race4maggiesplace.com.

Interested in Coffee Talk?

Life issues are in the news in sound bytes on a daily basis. There are emails and blogs of all sorts.

Would you like an opportunity to chat with other Catholics as well as a diocesan representative about what the Church says, plans, ponders, etc.?

Invite me to your group for a chat. It won't be a formal presentation. Let's just sit together. I'll bring the latest that I know and the coffee. You bring the participants. I am particularly interested in groups that cross boundaries like pro life and social justice or social concerns and seniors or people from more than one parish, school, institution, etc.



Give me a call and we'll coordinate schedules for an informal coffee chat over life issues.

Peggy Gerovac, Director, Pro Life
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The Moral Burdens of Biotechnology

Biotechnology interventions require the use of biological substances, which are often obtained by the destruction of human life or unusual tampering with it. Some areas of biotechnology include human embryonic stem cell research, whereby stem cells are harvested from human embryos; cloning, which can involve the development of transgenic beings (meaning half human and half cow, or half human and half pig); and fetal tissue transplantation into an adult. All these activities raise at least two moral concerns: (1) technologists are using and destroying human beings for the sake of research, and (2) they are doing this research without the consent of those human beings. These are not the only moral issues, of course, but I mention them because they clearly show ways in which human life is not recognized as life in unique, individual human beings until after they have passed through the birth canal alive.

One of the fundamental principles of research ethics is respect for a person's freedom to consent to participate in research and to withdraw consent at any time. This principle was developed after the trials of Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg and was written into the Nuremberg Code of Ethics. It is a principle that still stands today. Except that it does not extend to human embryos, because human embryos are not always viewed as human beings. Embryos developed through IVF, especially those who have not been implanted in their mother's wombs, are being denied human dignity and respect through the very means by which they came into being.

—by Debra R. Hanna, R.N.

Excerpts from *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 4, Winter 2009



"Let us not use bombs and guns to overcome the world. Let us use love and compassion. Peace begins with a smile. Smile five times a day at someone you really don't want to smile at all. Do it for peace. Let us radiate the peace of God and extinguish in the world ... all hatred and love for power It is not always easy. Sometimes I find it hard to smile at my sisters, but then I pray."

—Mother Teresa in
In the Heart of the World, edited by Becky Benenate
(New World Library)

Should the poor be central to the moral community?

Concern for the poor is one of the distinguishing features of Catholic environmentalism in contrast to secular environmentalism. This is where the notion of environmental justice comes in. It is the environmentalism of where we live, work, and play, not just an environmentalism that is concerned about what's happening elsewhere.

The vision is to incorporate the poor more fully into the human community, at the same time as we situate the human community within the earth community. What that means then is that the economic standards of people at the bottom need to be brought up, making it all the more incumbent upon us who are wealthy to simplify our lifestyle and create a more just global economic system.

—by Keith Douglass Warner, OFM
Excerpt from *U.S. Catholic*, April 2010

Should Right to Life and Peace and Justice Overlap?

What I would aspire to in a parish is that everybody who works on issues related to the gospel respect what everybody else is doing. People can't do everything. But in the church, we say we are one body. The foot is not the eye, and the eye is not the arm, and all the parts of the body have a place. We don't all have to be doing everything.

For my part I'm not terribly engaged in what's going on in the Congo, but I'm glad that there are people in our parish who are because it's a critical need. At the end of the day, I just have to realize I'm one guy and I can't do it all. I take pleasure and joy in working in a community where lots of people are doing lots of different things.

Do I need to make sure that everybody's doing the thing that I'm doing? I think in some ways that speaks to a lack of humility and a disrespect for the charism and the gifts of the other people in my community.

—by Jack Jezreel, Founder and Executive Director of
JustFaith Ministries
Excerpt from *U.S. Catholic*, June 2010

Are Food and Water Extraordinary Measures?

Ethical Principles on Caring for Those in a Vegetative State

—By E. Christian Brugger and William E. May
WASHINGTON, D.C., MAY 5, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Key ethical principles

There are several ethical principles relevant to assessing moral questions arising from persons said to be in the vegetative state: (1) Human bodily life, however burdened, is still a good of the person, integral to his or her being. (2) It is always gravely immoral intentionally to kill an innocent human being, i.e., to deprive him or her of the good of life itself. (3) Means chosen to preserve human life are morally obligatory if they are "morally" (not necessarily medically) "ordinary" or "proportionate." (4) Means chosen to preserve human life are not obligatory, and in fact their withholding or withdrawal may be morally indicated if they are "morally" (not necessarily medically) "extraordinary" or "disproportionate." (5) Means are extraordinary or disproportionate if the means chosen are either futile (=useless) or burdensome. Treatments can be burdensome for different valid reasons such as extreme pain that is unable to be regulated, extreme cost, interference with activities in which one legitimately wishes to engage although suffering from a fatal pathology, or that compel a person to leave loved ones and families to move to another area (e.g., to Arizona from Washington, D.C.), etc.

Note well: One can make judgments about the burdensomeness of different medical treatments because there are ways of objectively assessing the cost, pain, grave impositions on one's life style, etc. But one can never measure the worth of a human life because it is of incalculable worth and not capable of being measured. One cannot put a price on it because it is priceless.

These key ethical principles are applied in recent ecclesiastical documents treating the kind of care due to persons in the "vegetative state."

We were able to win not only the repeal of the death penalty. We also defeated funding of embryonic stem cell research at the University of New Mexico, a local version of FOCA, and assisted suicide. We defended the innocent life of the criminal. All on the basis of the consistent ethic of life that defends life from conception to natural death. The New Mexico Legislature heard our message.

—*Catholics Against Capital Punishment*
Vol. 19, No. 1, April 8, 2010

Pope on Rights of Migrants

Clashes between citizens and immigrants in Italy have prompted Pope Benedict XVI to speak out about the human dignity demanded for people who are toiling on foreign soil.

"Every migrant is a human being—different because of provenance, culture and tradition—but a person to be respected and having rights, particularly in work, where the temptation to exploit is easy," the pontiff said during his Jan. 10 Angelus address.

—*Our Sunday Visitor*, January 24, 2010



Makes you go hmmm....

(A Column of Quotes)

I will not give a lethal drug to anyone if I am asked, nor will I advise such a plan . . . I will keep them from harm and injustice.

—*Hippocratic Oath, 400 B.C.*

♦♦♦

On the human scale, falling, like rising, happens one small step at a time. A few small steps in one lifetime make for great movements in the story of humanity.

—Margaret Silf, *America*, April 5, 2010

♦♦♦

"The mystic Meister Eckhart was way ahead of his time when he stated some time before 1327, "Every single creature is full of God and is a book about God."

—*Catholic Update*, March 2010

♦♦♦

"...bodies matter to God—all bodies, not only those beautiful and full of life but also those damaged, violated, starving, dying..."

—Elizabeth A. Johnson, CSJ
U. S. Catholic, April 2010

♦♦♦

"They looked like wounded animals—many had been burned, cut, disfigured, or were dying of AIDS." But she also witnessed hope. "You could see the joy in the girls who had been rescued six months earlier," she says. "They were dancing and laughing in the courtyard. The beauty within the survivors is so much greater than the evil that's been inflicted on them."

—Sarah Symons, Friends of Maiti Nepal after visiting a shelter for rescued girls from sex trafficking as young as 7

♦♦♦

Only with the Incarnation of Christ was the personhood of man fully revealed, a revelation with profound import for the earthly dignity and spiritual destiny of every human being.

—The Revelation of Personhood,
Thomas K. Nelson MD
National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly
Winter 2009

♦♦♦

Christ is within and knocks on the walls of the heart to go out!"

—Capuchin Father Raniero
Cantalamessa