



# FOR LIFE

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## Pope Affirms Dignity of Human Being Until Sickness and Old Age "Medicine Is Always at the Service of Life"

Sickness and old age do not affect the dignity of the human being, and "medicine always places itself at the service of life," said John Paul II on Friday.

"Even when it knows it cannot defeat a serious pathology, it dedicates its own capabilities to alleviating suffering," he said addressing more than 600 participants of a Vatican conference on palliative care.

"To work with passion to help the patient in every situation means to be aware of the inalienable dignity of every human being, even those in the extreme conditions of a terminal state," the Holy Father said to the participants who included health personnel, pastoral agents, bioethicists and theologians.

"Suffering, old age, the unconscious state, the imminence of death do not lessen the person's intrinsic dignity, created in the image of God," he continued.

"Among the tragedies caused by an ethic that presumes to establish who can live and who can die, is that of euthanasia," he noted.

"Even if it is moved by sentiments of a misunderstood compassion or a misunderstood dignity that must be preserved, euthanasia instead of rescuing a person from suffering, eliminates the person," he clarified.

"[T]rue compassion, on the contrary, promotes every reasonable effort to favor the patient's healing." At the same time, it helps one to cease intervention when it "is no longer useful to achieve that end," he said.

"Rejection of aggressive therapy is not a rejection of the patient and of his life," the Pope asserted.

"[T]he eventual decision to not undertake or to interrupt therapy will be considered ethically correct when such therapy is ineffective or clearly disproportionate to the ends of supporting life or recovering health. Refusal of intense therapy, thus, is an expression of the respect that is owed to the patient in every instance," he stressed . . .

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 12, 2004 [Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)

### *Bearing Witness to Peace*

Lord God, we come to you in our need.  
Create in us an awareness of the massive forces  
that threaten our world today.  
Give us a sense of urgency  
to activate the forces of goodness, of justice, of love and of peace.  
Where there is armed conflict,  
let us stretch our arms to our brothers and sisters.  
Where there is abundance,  
let there be simple lifestyle and sharing.  
Where there is poverty,  
let there be dignified living and constant striving for just structures.  
Where there are wounds of division,  
let there be unity and wholeness.  
Help us to be committed to the building of your kingdom.  
Not seeking to be cared for, but to care.  
Not expecting to be served,  
but to pace ourselves in the service of others.  
Not aspiring to be materially secure,  
but to place our security in your love.  
Teach us your spirit.  
Only in loving imitation of you  
can we discover the healing springs of life  
that will bring new birth to our world.



--from *Prayer Without Borders*



*The understanding of ourselves and of the universe will attain a moment of genuine wisdom only if we are open to the numerous ways in which the human mind arrives at knowledge: through science*

*art  
philosophy  
and theology.*

—John Paul II

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Pope Affirms Dignity of Human Being . . . . .           | 1           |
| From the Director . . . . .                             | 2           |
| Holy Father Urges Respect for the Disabled . . . . .    | 3           |
| Vatican Addresses U.N. . . . .                          | 3           |
| Adult Stem-Cell Success Story . . . . .                 | 4           |
| From the Bishops' Plan . . . . .                        | 4           |
| God, My Strong Rock . . . . .                           | Insert Page |
| Discipleship in Uncertainty ( <i>Prayer</i> ) . . . . . | Insert Page |
| Upcoming Events . . . . .                               | Insert Page |
| Special Needs . . . . .                                 | Insert Page |
| Websites of Interest . . . . .                          | Insert Page |

## From the Director

The debate going on in the media and in polite conversations after the Election of 2004 seems to be about an exit poll that says Americans voting choices were based on moral values. My response is wonderful. This follows Catholic Moral teaching that says we must be part of the civil society where we live and that we should use our moral conscience to make choices. I can say this is exactly what I prayed for in our election.

Now there is another poll that indicates the thinking of Americans and that is the Nielsen ratings for television programming in the United States. A New York Times article entitled "Many Who Voted for 'Values' Still Like Their Television Sin" by Bill Carter was published November 22, 2004 in the New York Times. It said "the nightly television ratings bore little relation to the message apparently sent by a significant percentage of voters." The article goes on to say, "television shows are far more likely to keep pumping from the deep well of murder, mayhem and sexual transgression than seek diversion along the straight and narrow path". It seems that some television viewers, a big part of the population in the United States, do not align their television watching with moral values.

Some of you may be thinking at this point, what does this have to do with the Pro Life issues of the Catholic Church? Our moral conscience and our attention to upholding the sanctity and dignity of life is an everyday occurrence. We continue to refine our own values of life and we support society in its efforts to encourage people to support a consistent ethic of life. We may not be watching the violence of abortion on American TV, but what about murder, the degradation of the poor, homeless, mentally ill and any other persons depicted as marginalized in the media. When we spend time watching television that tells us entertainment is about sexual promiscuity and murder, I wonder how this is helping us develop our moral compass. "At the root of every act of violence against one's neighbor there is a concession to the thinking of the evil one, the one who "was a murderer from the beginning" (Jn 8:44)" (The Gospel of Life #8). Every input we bring to our conscience influences our future decisions and moral development.

I have often heard people say, "The violence doesn't affect me". My response is, I always want violence to upset me. I do not want to become desensitized so that violence doesn't horrify me every time I see it. I want to see it for the horror that it is, so that I can always see when another person's dignity, or even my own, is being compromised.

When I first began to minister with persons with mental illness, I felt afraid of violence. I thought that they would want to hurt me. I found that the people around me who worked with others who were mentally ill did not seem to respond as timidly as I did. So I watched. I came to find out that people with mental illness are not so concerned with harming me. They have a very serious illness and most of their energy is absorbed in self-care for these tragic illnesses. Then I reflected on this fear. I wonder how I developed the fear when I had never before spent time with people who suffered from severe mental illness. My reflection led me to the experiences where I "learned" about people with mental illness. I learned a bit in my studies, but I recalled many television programs that showed individuals with mental illness in violent, uncontrollable behaviors. I learned from television and movies that people with mental illness were violent and would hurt me. Thankfully, I had some real life experiences and developed some real life relationships with people who suffer mental illness. I have now recovered from my distorted understanding of people who deserve respect and dignity because they too were created in the image and likeness of God. All life is sacred even when a life is significantly challenged by illness.

This winter season, when we are homebound by cold and snow, what input shall we put in our lives. What type of entertainment and development will we engage in, so that our "inputs" might reflect the culture of life we are so valiantly trying to bring about in our world? Might we read some beautiful Scripture or reflect on nature, all around us, that desperately needs preserving or research a Pro Life issue that we have never considered before or spend some extra time in prayer? May our own hearts be opened to value life even more and our ministry be even more life inspiring.

How can we actively pursue life-giving inputs instead of following the crowd, watching network programs devoted to devaluing people? We pray that God's will be done through us. Isn't it worth doing God's will without the tarnish of murder, mayhem and sexual transgression in our conscience building minds?

When we dedicate ourselves to life, we can find so many ways to enrich our praise and gratitude for life and continue to form our moral conscience more and more in line with the teachings and example of Jesus. What are your inputs? Have you needed any refining like I did about the dignity of persons with mental illness? What other refining do I need? How can my work in Pro Life ministries grow from fewer anti-life inputs?

Peggy Gerovac

*...When the promotion of the dignity of the person is the guiding principle, and when the search for the common good is the overriding commitment, then solid and lasting foundations for building peace are laid. But when human rights are ignored or scorned, and when the pursuit of individual interests unjustly prevails over the common good, then the seeds of instability, rebellion and violence are inevitably sown.*

—John Paul II



*"Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may judge what is God's will, what is good, pleasing and perfect."*

Romans 12:2

## Holy Father Urges Respect for the Disabled And That Includes the Unborn, He Stresses



John Paul II made an urgent appeal, especially to politicians, to respect the life of the disabled, the weak and the poor, whether born or unborn.

The Pope made his appeal during his meeting Saturday with 50 members of the Christian Office of the Disabled, who arrived from France on pilgrimage, on the 40th anniversary of the office's foundation.

Among those present was the founder, Marie Helene Mathieu, a pioneer in special education. Mathieu, together with Jean Vanier (founder of L'Arche Communities), is also founder of the Fire and Light movement for the spiritual assistance of the disabled and their families.

"Your presence," the Holy Father told the group, "invites me to appeal once again in an urgent manner to all people of good will, especially government leaders and legislators, to have a heightened awareness and humanity so that all human life is protected, especially that of the weakest, the smallest and the poorest, and to halt all actions aimed at

eliminating conceived and unborn children, who are defenseless, with man thus making himself the master of life."

"To strike the little ones is, in a certain sense, to strike our own humanity, as there is among all the same fraternity and the same solidarity," he said.

The Pope thanked his guests for the care they give "to persons suffering from some disability."

"You remind people that the person is not reduced to his aptitudes and place in economic life, but rather is a creature of God, loved by him for himself, not for what he does," he said.

The objective of the Christian Office of the Disabled, which arose in France in 1963, is to study and apply all initiatives that contribute to the well-being, and social and ecclesial integration of the sick or disabled.

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 16, 2004 [Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)

## Vatican Addresses U.N. on Population and Development

In observing the 10th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, we recall the vital importance of the well-being and progress of every member of the human family. This theme of the Cairo Conference continues to have a heightened significance in the light of the fact that the gap between the rich and the poor of the world is still widening, a situation which poses an ever increasing threat to the peace for which humanity longs. The theme of the Cairo Conference emphasizes the reality that all proper concerns about human population are inextricably connected with the development and flourishing of every human being.

An important milestone at ICPD was the link between migration and development that, ever since, has prompted increased sensitivity, research, cooperation and effective policies in this field. Migration is now recognized as a major challenge for all, linked to development and poverty, as well as to financial and health security. In particular, migrants are now seen as proactive agents of development. While appreciating the proper importance of these achievements, states now have to focus much more on creating jobs where people live.

Political will and firm determination are needed on the part of governments and civil society in order to foster a proper cultural, social and juridical environment capable of overcoming the persistent phenomena of discrimination, violence, human trafficking and xenophobia. Migration, now more than 10 years ago, has international attention because of demographics in the developed world ....

Population policy is only one part of an overall strategy for the betterment of humanity. It is essential that any discus-

sion of population policies must simultaneously consider the actual and projected development of the human race. All development worthy of the name must be integral and cannot consist in the simple accumulation of wealth and in the greater availability of goods and services, but must be pursued with due consideration for the social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of every human being. Development programs must respect the cultural heritage of peoples and nations, foster structures of participation and shared responsibility, and empower our human capacity, so that each one of us can become the person that he or she was created to be ....

NEW YORK, OCT. 18, 2004 [Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)

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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.

**Pro Life Office**  
7911 Detroit Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44102  
(216) 334-2965

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

## Adult Stem-Cell Success Story from *FAMILY Resources Center News*, Nov. 2004

WASHINGTON—A bishops' aide praised the examples of two women helped by stem cell treatment as "a powerful witness against the embryonic research PR machine" at a June 24 press conference in Washington, D.C.

The press conference, conducted by Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., featured the women whose severe spinal cord injuries have been treated with adult stem cells.

Laura Dominguez was a quadriplegic at 16 after a car accident severely damaged her spinal cord, but after treatment using her own olfactory sinus stem cells she can now walk with the aid of braces.

A car accident also left Susan Fajt paralyzed, but she, too, can walk with braces today because of experimental new adult stem cell treatment.

"These brave young women give a human face to the fight for ethical stem cell research," said Cathy Cleaver Ruse, a spokeswoman for the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities.

Adult stem cells and other ethically acceptable alternatives have already helped hundreds of thousands of patients, and new clinical uses expand almost weekly, the bishops' conference said on its Web site. In fact, non-embryonic cell therapies have quickly moved forward to perform many of the tasks once thought to be possible only with embryonic stem cells.

"These and other inspiring breakthroughs in the area of adult stem cell research show the power of ethical research—and its beauty," Ruse said. "There is an ugliness to embryonic stem cell research that even its proponents cannot hide. When we decide to subjugate one vulnerable class of human beings for service of another, we are all diminished."

## From the Bishops' Plan excerpt from "Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities"

### ***The Legacy of Roe v. Wade***

In January 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States gave our nation *Roe v. Wade* and its companion decision *Doe v. Bolton*, and in so doing effectively removed every legal protection from human beings prior to birth. The legacy of *Roe* is virtually incalculable. In its wake it has left death and sorrow and turmoil:

! the death of millions whose lives were destroyed before

birth and even during the very process of being born

! countless women traumatized so deeply by abortion that they spend years struggling to find peace, healing, and reconciliation

! men who grieve because they could not "choose" to protect a child they helped bring into existence

! a society increasingly coarsened by toleration and acceptance of acts that purposely destroy human life

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

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## God, My Strong Rock *[a reflection by John Paul II]*

Here is a translation of John Paul II's address at today's general audience, which he dedicated to reflect on Psalm 61(62). The gentle words of Psalm 61(62) have just resounded, a song of trust, which opens with a sort of antiphon, repeated in the middle of the text. It is like a serene and strong short prayer, an invocation that is also a program of life: "My soul rests in God alone, from whom comes my salvation. God alone is my rock and salvation, my secure height; I shall never fall" (verses 2-3,6-7).

As it unfolds, however, the Psalm contrasts two kinds of trust. They are two fundamental choices, one good and the other perverse, which entail two different types of moral conduct. First of all, is trust in God, exalted in the initial invocation where a symbol of stability and security appears, like the rock, "the rock of defense," namely a fortress and bulwark of protection. The Psalmist confirms: "My safety and glory are with God, my strong rock and refuge" (verse 8). He affirms this after recalling the hostile plots of his enemies who "plot to dislodge him" (see verses 4-5). However, there is also a trust of an idolatrous nature, on which the one praying fixes, with insistence, his critical attention. It is a trust that leads one to seek security and stability in violence, robbery and wealth.

Then a very clear and sharp appeal is made: "Do not trust in extortion; in plunder put no empty hope. Though wealth increase, do not set your heart upon it" (verse 11). It evokes three idols, proscribed as contrary to the dignity of man and to social coexistence.

The first false god is violence, which, unfortunately, humanity continues to engage in also in our blood-drenched days. This

idol is accompanied by an immense procession of abominable wars, oppressions, prevarications, tortures and killings, inflicted without a trace of remorse.

The second false god is robbery, which is manifested in extortion, social injustice, usury, and political and financial corruption. Too many people cultivate the "illusion" of satisfying in this world their own greed.

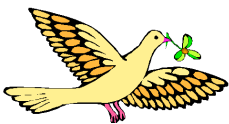
Finally, wealth is the third idol to which "the heart" of man "attaches itself" with the deceitful hope of being able to save himself from death (see Psalm 48[49]) and assure himself prestige and power.

By serving this diabolical triad, man forgets that the idols have no consistency; what is more, they are harmful. By trusting in things and in himself, man forgets he is "a breath ... an illusion," in fact, if weighed on a scale, "less than a breath" (Psalm 61[62]: 10; [ ]).

If we were more aware of our perishability and limitations as creatures, we would not choose the path of trust in idols, nor would we organize our lives on a hierarchy of fragile and inconsistent pseudo-values. We would opt, rather, for the other trust, that which is centered on the Lord, source of eternity and peace. To him alone, in fact, "power belongs"; he alone is source of grace; he alone is the author of justice, who "requires a man according to his work" (see Psalm 61[62]:11-12).

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 10, 2004 [Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)

## Discipleship in Uncertainty



It helps now and then to step back and take the long view... We accomplish in our lifetimes only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is the Lord's work.

Nothing we do is complete. No one sermon says all that should be said. No one prayer fully expresses our faith. No one reconciliation brings perfection. No one program accomplishes the mission. No one set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about, we plant seeds that one day will grow. We water

seeds already planted knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond capabilities.

We cannot do everything. And yet, we must do something and do it very, very well. And although it may be incomplete, it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

And although we may never see the end results, we remain workers, ministers, not Messiahs. We are prophets of a future that is not our own.

Archbishop Oscar Romero  
Assassinated March 25, 1980  
El Salvador

### *Thou shalt not kill, part two*

*"We kill at every step, not only in wars, riots, and executions. We kill when we close our eyes to poverty, suffering, and shame. In the same way all disrespect for life, all hard-heartedness, all indifference, all contempt is nothing else than killing. With just a little witty skepticism we can kill a good deal of the future in a young person. Life is waiting everywhere, the future is flowering everywhere, but we only see a small part of it and step on much of it with our feet."*

—Hermann Hesse  
German poet and novelist



## Upcoming Events . . .

### January 23-24, 2005—National Prayer Vigil for Life

Sponsored by The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, 400 Michigan Avenue NE, Washington, D.C.

Sunday, January 23—8:00 pm-Vigil Mass for Life; 10:30 pm-National Rosary for Life; 11:30 pm-Night Prayer

Monday, January 24—12:00-6:30 am-Holy Hours; 6:30 am-Morning Prayer; 7:30 am-Mass of Penance & Prayer

Visit the USCCB website at [www.usccb.org/prolife](http://www.usccb.org/prolife) for more information regarding area events and other activities during this two-day Prayer Vigil.

### January 24, 2005—Rosary for Life—“March for Life”

Join the “March for Life” in Washington, D.C. at noon, Monday, January 24. Busses will be leaving many parishes at 9 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 23 and returning at 2 a.m. Tues., Jan. 25. For details of the bus nearest your parish, call Frank Kosmerl at 216-362-6091.

February 9-11, 2005—“Jesus Christ, Hope for Africa—Youth, Health and AIDS” is the theme (chosen by John Paul II) of the 13th World Day of the Sick.

February 16, 2005—Cupid’s Closet—Birthright Lake Co. Valentine Fundraiser at the La Malfa Centre. For more info, call 440-975-9055.

**Does your organization need assistance?** Contact the Pro Life Office at [www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife](http://www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife) and we can place an article whenever space allows.



## Websites of Interest . . .

### **Pro Life Office**

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

### **Consistent Life**

[www.Consistent-Life.org](http://www.Consistent-Life.org)

### **International Catholic News**

[Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)

### **National Catholic Aids Network**

[www.ncan.org](http://www.ncan.org)

### **USCCB: Renewing the Mind of the Media**

[www.usccb.org/comm/renewingeng.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/comm/renewingeng.shtml)

### **A Unique Way to Help the Troops**

[www.heromiles.org](http://www.heromiles.org)

Operation Hero Miles was created by the US Airlines and Congressman Ruppberger. Soldiers are flown to their military base; however, if their home is elsewhere, they must pay for the flight to their family home themselves. The program relies on the generosity of thousands of fliers who have donated over 540 million frequent flier miles to help our soldiers.

Donations are currently being accepted from the following airlines: **Delta, Northwest, and Southwest.**

The following airlines are participating in Operation Hero Miles by providing free flights to soldiers and their families, but are not accepting airline mile donations: **American, Independence, Pan-Am, US Airways.**



## Special Needs . . .

### **Womankind Maternal and Prenatal Care Center**

Located in Garfield Hts., is currently in need of medical and non-medical volunteers to give loving medical care and emotional support to our clients. If you would like to help provide a positive alternative to abortion, call Dianne at 216-662-5700.

### **St. Kizito Scholarship Initiative**

Please consider lending your support to the St. Kizito Scholarship Initiative. The youngest of the Ugandan Martyrs, Kizito was only 13 years old when he was slain in 1880 by the Bagandan ruler Mwanga for refusing to engage in immoral conduct. His playmates said of him that he was handsome, healthy, most cheerful and guileless in his conduct. He looked forward to a future filled with promise. Our young African sisters and brothers, many of them orphaned by violence and disease, need our help to secure a more blessed future.

To contribute please send a check made out to The Propagation of Faith to: Cleveland Diocesan Mission Office, The Catholic Center, 1031 Superior Avenue, Rm 262, Cleveland, OH 44114-2519.

Be sure to indicate that this contribution is in support of the St. Kizito Scholarship Initiative. Further inquiries can be directed to Rev. Don Dunson 440-943-7600.

### **Birthright Connection Wish List**

(Birthright Lake, Inc., 7471 Tyler Blvd., Unit C, Mentor, OH 44060)

We know things are rough for everyone right now, but these are some of the items we could use in and for the Birthright office. Your help with any of these items would be greatly appreciated.

- Diapers (Size: Newborn to 6)
- Crib Sheets/Bassinette Sheets
- Newborn Outfits, Onesies, Sleepers
- Onesies (Undershirts) and Sleepers (Size 12 mos.)
- Baby Shampoo and Baby Bath Soap; Wipes
- Toilet Paper, Kleenex and Paper Towels

We also collect toiletries you get in hotels (shampoo, bar soaps, lotion, etc.) and makeup and perfume samples from your purchase of Clinique or Este Lauder items. These items are packaged and given to our “New Moms.” Call 440-975-9055 for more information.

**The Good Samaritan Foundation**, recently established by John Paul II, aims to offer financial support to needy patients, especially AIDS sufferers. The Vatican-headquartered foundation, established Sept. 12, has been entrusted to the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers.

The Holy Father John Paul II invites all men of good will, especially those of countries that are more economically advanced, to contribute to the foundation’s objectives, “the cardinal added. In this connection, he mentioned the challenge posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and referred to data of a U.N. report, saying that “since the disease appeared in the 1980’s, more than 22 million people have died and 27.8 million suffer from it.”

Contributions can be made by bank transfer or draft in dollars or euros and sent to the institute for Religious Works (IOR), Vatican City 00120. International checks can be made out to “Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragán, President of the Good Samaritan Foundation, Palazzo S. Paolo, Vatican City 00120.”