



For Life

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Imagine Life as God Does Pontiff Defends Role of Disabled in Society

AMMAN, Jordan, May 8, 2009 (Zenit.org)

Benedict XVI is defending the contribution made to society by those with disabilities, choosing as his first stop during his weeklong Holy Land pilgrimage a home for mentally or physically handicapped youth.

Benedict XVI offered a reflection on the mystery of suffering as he spoke with the disabled youngsters and their caregivers.

"At times it is difficult to find a reason for what appears only as an obstacle to be overcome or even as pain—physical or emotional—to be endured," he said. "Yet faith and understanding help us to see a horizon beyond our own selves in order to imagine life as God does. God's unconditional love, which gives life to every human individual, points to a meaning and purpose for all human life."

"Your experience of trials, your witness to compassion, and your determination to overcome the obstacles you encounter, encourage me in the belief that suffering can bring about change for the good," he said. "In our own trials, and standing alongside others in their struggles, we glimpse the essence of our humanity, we become, as it were, more human."

"And we come to learn that, on another plane, even hearts hardened by cynicism or injustice or unwillingness to forgive are never beyond the reach of God, can always be opened to a new way of being, a vision of peace."

Pope warns of eugenics risk

—excerpt from *Our Sunday Visitor*, March 8, 2009

Pope Benedict XVI praised modern discoveries in the field of genetics, but warned of new and subtle efforts to discriminate against people with genetic defects or illnesses. "Any discrimination carried out by any power against persons, populations or ethnic groups on the basis of real or presumed genetic factors is an attack against all humanity," the pope said in a speech Feb. 21 to participants of an international conference sponsored by the Pontifical Academy for Life on the topic "The New Frontiers of Genetics and the Risk of Eugenics."

New Federal law would help women in crisis pregnancies Expanded support structure

—excerpt from *Our Sunday Visitor*, May 24, 2009

The Pregnant Women Support Act includes a number of provisions to help women faced with an unplanned or crisis pregnancy to feel that abortion is not the only alternative. It would:



- Remove the designation of pregnancy as "pre-existing condition" in health care coverage.
- Establish a federally funded, toll-free hot line to direct women to services that can provide them with assistance during and after their pregnancy.
- Provide support, including education grants and child care, to parents who are teenagers or college students.
- Extend coverage under the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to pregnant women and their unborn children and increase funding to the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutritional program.
- Increase federal funding to programs for pregnant domestic violence victims.
- Offer parenting education programs in maternity group homes.
- Provide services to parents who learn that their child will suffer from Down syndrome or other prenatally diagnosed conditions.
- Distribute grants to health centers for the purchase of ultrasound equipment.
- Requires institutions that offer abortions to provide accurate information to pregnant women about their options, including adoption, and the potential short-term and long-term complications associated with abortion.

Please copy and distribute freely.

From the Director

A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

—John 10:10

As Catholic Christians we are called to carry out the message and ministry of Jesus with our own lives. Jesus came to give life. It seems that the ministry of pro life is really about us carrying out this message as the Body of Christ in our world today. The words of destruction and violence are of the past. Jesus comes to bring to the world abundant life, and we are called to do the same. Does our ministry stand out as one that gives life and hope and abundance to the world?

I often say to people who are trying to choose a “reaching out” strategy or a new manifestation of pro life ministry, “you catch more bees with honey than vinegar.” So I attempt to ask people to invite and engage people to support life by telling the positive, hopeful message.

I don’t often (if ever) site this passage from the Gospel of John. Yet, now as I reflect on this passage, I feel this is exactly what Jesus calls us to do. If we are to carry out the ministry of Jesus, he himself said that his purpose was give life and give it to the full, as this passage is sometimes translated.

So what is full life for the unborn, the disabled, those living in war-torn violent societies? What is the fullest life that life can be for the dying, those on death row, people who live in modern day slavery? Yes, the situations people exist in are intolerable; but our message must be one of abundance, hope, joy, exuberance for what our world can be.

So what does this look like in our parishes, our schools and in our personal lives? I think we must be careful to focus on the person and not the rhetoric. How do we honor people whose dignity is marginalized in society or someone whose life has already been ended prematurely? How do find ways to help those whose lives are threatened? How do we bring abundance? How do we check ourselves when language or affiliation or motivation seems more like retaliation than giving life?

We try to help the afflicted by prayer, by changing circumstances, by changing perceptions, by

changing legislation, etc. There are many Catholic groups and organizations that do this ministry in our diocese with many different expressions. I am sure I don’t come close to knowing the all of it and that speaks to me of abundance. Since there is no end to abundance, we can still find more ways to participate in Jesus’ ministry of giving life.

At this moment in our diocese, there is renewed sense of respect for life and many parish organizations are developing or renewing their pro life ministry. In honoring Jesus, the One who loves each and every person with great abundance, pro life ministry can be a message of invitation and hope and joy. Can you participate in this abundant ministry?

—by Peggy Gerovac

WEBSITES OF INTEREST



www.catholicclimatecovenant.org

www.pornnomore.com

A Catholic Apostolate dedicated to addressing individual and societal pornography addiction

www.stemcellresearch.org

Read stem cell success stories
(Only the ethical ones are working)

New draft guidelines for federally funded stem cell research involving the destruction of human embryos, released by the National Institutes of Health, mark a new chapter in divorcing biomedical research from its necessary ethical foundation. Without unconditional respect for the life of each and every member of the human race, research involving human subjects does not represent true progress. It becomes another way for some human beings to use and mistreat others for their own goals. Suffering patients and their families deserve better, through increased support for promising and ethically sound stem cell research and treatments that harm no one.

—Cardinal Justin Rigali,
Chairman of the U.S. Catholic Bishops’ Committee
on Pro-Life Activities

For more information, see the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities’ special stem cell page “Oppose Destructive Stem Cell Research” at:

www.usccb.org/stemcellcampaign

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Refugee Resettlement Saves Lives



Refugee resettlement is a life-saving, humanitarian response to those fleeing persecution. These individuals are in urgent need of protection and often have nowhere else to turn.

Refugees are not economic migrants or immigrants looking for better jobs or opportunities for their families. They are individuals given legal status to enter the country because they are fleeing persecution. Resettlement offers them a chance at a new life.

While these are difficult economic times for everyone, refugees do not have the luxury of waiting for the economy to improve. Their situation is urgent and life-threatening. Delayed action may cost lives.

Although safe and voluntary repatriation is usually the most desirable course of action, resettlement is often the only option for refugees. They are granted sanctuary in the U.S. because they are in danger, cannot return home safely, and cannot be safely integrated into their countries of asylum overseas.

—USCCB Migration and Refugee Services
March 2009



Prayer Corner

The St. Francis Pledge

I/we pledge to:

PRAY and reflect on the duty to care for God's Creation and protect the poor and vulnerable.

LEARN about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change.

ASSESS how we, as individuals and in our families, parishes and other affiliations, contribute to climate change by our own energy use, consumption, waste, etc.

ACT to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to climate change.

ADVOCATE for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.

—Source: *Catholic Climate Covenant*

Pornography hurts everybody

It hurts individuals who spend time and money they can't afford in pursuit of thrills that never really satisfy the heart;

It hurts marriages when spouses feel alienated from those they love the most;

It hurts children when their parents can't set a good example for them;

It hurts the thousands of people, mostly women, involved in the sex industry, many of whom have been the victims of sexual exploitation and crime from a very young age;

It hurts society when it erodes our standards of decency and respect for other human beings.

—www.diocese-kcsj.org/myhousekcsj

Project Rachel: A Post Abortive Ministry

A Special Word from John Paul II

"I would now like to say a special word to women who have had an abortion. The Church is aware of the many factors which may have influenced your decision, and she does not doubt that in many cases it was a painful and even shattering decision. The wound in your heart may not yet have healed. Certainly what happened was and remains terribly wrong. But do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope. Try rather to understand what happened and face it honestly. If you have not already done so, give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance. The Father of Mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You will come to understand that nothing is definitively lost and you will also be able to ask forgiveness from your child, who is now living in the Lord..."

—Pope John Paul II (*The Gospel of Life*)

Volume 15

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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

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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 Catholics as well as a what the Church says,



opportunity to chat with other diocesan representative about plans, ponders, etc.?

Invite me to your won't be a formal just sit together. I'll know and the participants. I am

group for a chat. It presentation. Let's bring the latest that I coffee. You bring the 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.

216-334-2965

pmgerovac@clevelandcatholiccharities.org

Do you want to stay current on pro life issues from the Catholic Church perspective? Our website is updated almost daily. If you would like to receive occasional Email Alerts, send a request to:

pmgerovac@clevelandcatholiccharities.org



Wish List . . .

Womankind Maternal & Prenatal Care Center at 5400 Transportation Blvd. in Garfield Heights can use and will accept the following. Contact 216-662-5700 to donate.

- **New or clean, gently used:**

- Infant toddler clothing (to 24 months)
- Maternity clothing
- Cribs*, car seats, strollers, playpens, high chairs
*(*for safety reasons, crib slats can be no more than 2 3/8" apart; approx. the width of an upright pop can)*

- **Diapers** (all sizes); baby wipes; formula

Womankind regrets that they cannot accept donations of toys and thanks you in advance for your understanding.

Crossroads: Taking Steps to Save Lives

This summer from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic, 3 simultaneous walks for the unborn will cover over 11,000 miles, pass through 38 states, 2 provinces and thousands of towns and cities. From July 25-28 Crossroads will be in the Cleveland Diocese. Are you interested in helping or participating with them while they are here? If so, please call Brendan Flannery at 1-800-353-8817 or email

Brendan@crossroadswalk.org.

Crossroads is a Civil Rights organization that is faithful to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. With this in mind, Crossroads welcomes and encourages members of all faiths to participate in its activities, noting that all are charged with the duty to defend the sanctity and dignity of all human life from its very beginnings in the womb to natural death.

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7911 Detroit Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44102



There will never be a more important time to stop assisted suicide!



Consider the context:

- Assisted suicide has been promoted by the euthanasia lobby for many years. The pressure to legalize assisted suicide has never been greater than now.
- Last November, Washington State legalized assisted suicide through a referendum vote making it the second state, after Oregon, to legalize assisted suicide.
- Last December, a Judge in Montana imposed assisted suicide upon that state by judicial fiat making Montana the third state to allow the direct and intentional killing of its citizens. That decision is being appealed.
- Last year Luxembourg legalized euthanasia.
- This Spring, the euthanasia lobby introduced legislation to legalize assisted suicide in Hawaii, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New Mexico, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and last Friday a new bill was introduced in Vermont.

—*Second-International Symposium on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide*

Ohio Death Penalty Status

—*from Ohioans to Stop Executions*

- ♦ Ohio executions in 2008 were the fewest since 2001
- ♦ New death sentences in Ohio were at the lowest level since 1981
- ♦ Jeffrey Hill of Hamilton County was granted clemency in February after an unprecedented recommendation against his death sentence by the Ohio Parole Board
- ♦ Joe D'Ambrosio of Cuyahoga County was released on bond after spending 20+ years on death row and will finally receive a new trial in May
- ♦ Federal legislation has been introduced in the US Senate banning the use of the death penalty
- ♦ Four executions are scheduled from July-Sept. 2009 (See www.ohiocathconf.org)

No Easy Way to Stop Human Trafficking Archbishop Considers Roots of Problem

ROME, MAY 22, 2009 (Zenit.org)

Though trafficking in human beings is a "tremendous offense to dignity," there is no easy solution to this multifaceted and international problem, says a Vatican official. Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers, considered the gravity of human trafficking during an address at a conference organized by the Association of the Pope John XXIII Community.

The prelate called trafficking "one of the most shameful [phenomena] of our epoch." He recognized that "poverty and the lack of opportunities and social cohesion" are at the root of this tragedy, since these causes "bring people to seek a better future despite risks."

And trafficking in human beings continues to spread, in part because of "an absence of specific norms in some countries, victims' ignorance of their rights, the sociocultural structure and armed conflicts," Archbishop Marchetto contended.

He also mentioned the "current restrictions that emigrants find in legally going to developed countries."

Archbishop Marchetto lamented that "there are no easy solutions," and affirmed that a "coherent and integral approach" is needed to stop this particular form of abuse.

"Not only the need of the victims [should be considered]," he said, "but also the just punishment for those who benefit from this activity and the implementation of preventive measures, in the first place to increase awareness and sensitivity, and also to take on the causes of this phenomenon."





A Word About Violence

Our goal is to eliminate violence against unborn children, their mothers, and those who are dying. We unalterably oppose the use of violence in any form to achieve this objective, and we condemn the actions of those few who advocate otherwise. During the past decade, several persons involved in the practice of abortion have been killed, and others have been harmed, by tragically misguided individuals claiming to be pro-life. Such violence against human beings is indefensible. It is an offense against God's command: *you shall not kill*. It also unjustly stigmatizes the pro-life movement in the eyes of many Americans as being violent and intolerant. We abhor and condemn such violence unequivocally.

—*Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities, A Campaign in Support of Life A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops*

More Respect, Not More Condoms

A response to Media Criticism of Pope

As an Archbishop, dealing on a daily basis with people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, I know that the Pope is speaking the truth. I suspect that those who were so vociferous in condemning the Pope have never touched an HIV infected person, let alone rendered any care and attention. It is so much easier to distribute gadgets, especially at other people's expense.

What reduces infections is less casual sex, not more condoms. That is the truth.

Those who accuse the Pope of being "unrealistic," that young people will have sex anyway, have no respect for the young people. When they are given true orientation, they freely respond with far greater sexual responsibility that the armchair social experts can ever imagine.

As an African Archbishop, it is my nephews and nieces that are in danger of dying of HIV/AIDS. Let no one ever suggest that they are more concerned about them than I am. The condom distributors should listen to the truth coming not only from the Pope and Bishops, but even from impartial and serious scientific research. The facts are there, as Cardinal Pell has briefly illustrated. To ignore these facts is the greatest disservice anyone can do to the future of Africa. The struggle continues, and we are overcoming!

—*Archbishop John Onaiyekan, Archdiocese of Abuja, Nigeria Zenit, April 25, 2009*

USCCB on the U.S. Budget

The budget choices of Congress have clear moral and human dimensions; they reflect our values as a people. In his Encyclical, *God is Love*, Pope Benedict XVI reminded us: "Politics is more than a mere mechanism for defining the rules of public life: its origin and its goal are found in justice, which by its very nature has to do with ethics. The State must inevitably face the question of how justice can be achieved here and now." (#28)

—*March 26, 2009 letter to the Senate from the USCCB*

Views on conscience rights

Here are the results of a March 23-25 survey of Americans on whether or not they support conscience rights for health care professionals:

87%

Percentage of American adults surveyed who said it's important to ensure that health care professionals are not forced to take part in procedures they object to on moral grounds.

57%

Percentage of U.S. adults who oppose regulations that would require health care workers to perform or provide medical procedures to which they have moral or ethical objections.

54%

Percentage of those surveyed who said they would be less likely to back their U.S. representative if he or she voted against conscience protections.

—*Source: the polling company/Woman Trend on behalf of the Christian Medical Association*



Makes you go hmmm....

(A Column of Quotes)

The church teaches, in harmony with divine revelation, that every human life is sacred and inviolable from conception to natural death. Yet abortion is widely accepted and legalized. Wars abound. Suicide bombings, terrorist attacks and public shootings kill innocent people. Domestic violence, human trafficking, racism, assisted suicide, capital punishment and so many other acts and attitudes degrade what is made in the image of God.

—*Origins, May 14, 2009, Volume 39, No. 1*

♦♦♦

"Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends to the rest of creation."

—*John Paul II New Year's Day 1990 entitled "Peace With God the Creator, Peace With All of Creation"*