



FOR LIFE

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2005

In His Last Days, John Paul II Helped the Pro-life Cause

RIMINI, Italy, APRIL 28, 2005 (Zenit.org)

Four days before his death, Pope John Paul II allocated 25,000 euros to the Italian Pro-Life Movement, which helps mothers and their unborn babies.



The donation was revealed Monday by Carlo Casini, the movement's president, during the association's national assembly in Rimini.

"I find it moving that this help, altogether unexpected and absolutely spontaneous, along with his words of encouragement and blessing, arrived on March 29, four days before the Holy Father's death," Casini said.

"I have decided to allocate the sum to the Gemma Project to 'adopt' those mothers who would be pushed to abort for financial reasons," he added. The Gemma Project offers financial support to expectant mothers who opt against abortion in favor of life.

Morality

Each day, in large and small matters, I make decisions between doing what is moral and what is not, striving to please You.

Bless me with increased sensitivity to Your call so that I may also strive to choose the better over the good.

*—Prayer s About Everyday Stuff
by John van Bemmel*

AIDS Responsibility

Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, 14 September 1995, #116



The battle against AIDS ought to be everyone's battle. Echoing the voice of the Synod Fathers, I too ask pastoral workers to bring to their brothers and sisters affected by AIDS all possible **material, moral and spiritual comfort**. I urgently ask the world's scientists and political leaders, moved by the love and respect due to every human person, to every means available in order to put an end to this scourge.

Our first goal is to help these people achieve basic human development. We try to restore the sense of dignity that they should have as human beings, as well as children of the same Father. To accomplish this, we don't look first and see if they are dying or if they have a whole life ahead of them.

—Mother Teresa

Thoughts on the Gospel of Life

An excerpt from Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics, A Statement from the U.S. Catholic Bishops

U.S. economic and military power has sometimes led to grave injustices abroad. At home, it has fueled self-absorption, indifference and consumerist excess. Overconfidence in our power, made even more pronounced by advances in science and technology, has created the illusion of a life without natural boundaries and actions without consequences. The standards of the marketplace, instead of being guided by sound morality, threaten to displace it. We are now witnessing the gradual restructuring of American culture according to ideals of utility, productivity and cost-effectiveness. It is a culture where moral questions are submerged by a river of goods and services and where the misuse of marketing and public relations subverts public life.

“Vicious Circle” of Arms

NEW YORK, MAY 5, 2005 (Zenit.org)



The Holy See is urging that the world community respect the commitment to end the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to eliminate existing ones.

The Vatican's position was voiced Wednesday by Archbishop Celestino Migliore, permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, when addressing the U.N. review conference of the state-parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

"The time has gone for finding ways to a 'balance in terror,'" the prelate said. "The time has come to re-examine the whole strategy of nuclear deterrence. . ."

"Thus, in an effort to put priorities and hierarchies of values in their proper place, a greater common effort must be made to mobilize resources towards moral, cultural and economic development so that humanity may turn its back on the arms race."

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From the Director

Human dignity is the core principle of the Catholic pro life teaching. We are taught in very early catechesis that everyone is created in the image and likeness of God, everyone (Catechism #1700, Genesis 1:27). I'd like to look at some ways that human dignity has been upheld and some ways that human dignity is repressed. This may help us examine our world in light of human dignity. There are so many stories to tell. Everyday we hear stories from our family, from friends, in news reports and even in the entertainment industry of life upheld or life denied. Since I spend so much of my time talking, researching and writing about very real people who are loved by God, I find myself listening to the stories with new ears, I might even say cleansed ears.

“When God created man and woman in his own image, he saw that ‘it was very good,’ and, despite the dark voices, no man or woman can every change that.”

-Henri Nouwen

In Uganda, Africa, there is much civil unrest. People live in instability and fear for themselves and their loved ones. Yet, their own loved ones sometimes become the perpetrator, the ones who do not honor human dignity. Rebel forces in this country, like other countries, kidnap young people to join their ranks and support their cause. The young girls are often kidnapped into prostitution. But the young boys are kidnapped, too. They are taken from their homes and their communities. Their captors work fast and aggressively to convert their minds in a very effective and disturbing way. You see, the captors' goal is to change the mindset of a young man from being loved to undeserving of love. When people see themselves as unlovable because of some action they have done, a sense of unworthiness and an identity as unlovable can consume them.

These boys from Uganda are forced to murder within one week of their capture. Yes, it is initiation. It may teach them to hate others, but it also teaches them to hate themselves. To think of themselves as murderer, not one deserving of good, not part of the loving, caring community they lived in less than a week ago. So they now go about their lives living out of their violence and forgetting their goodness. If I think of myself as bad and unforgivable, I can continue to rape, murder and pillage. When my goodness is upheld, when I understand that God's image is a part of me, when I identify with my place in the Body of Christ, I am good enough to do good.

“Hope is like a road in the country: before there was no road, but when many people walked on it, the road came into existence.”

- Lin Yutang

I have hope that we can help all people to acknowledge their own goodness and live their lives sharing that goodness. Everyday I see people helping others to find the image of God in themselves. We are working to bring the wholeness

of the Body of Christ to fruition in our world. One way people's dignity is given focus is a ministry that I have the privilege of seeing at work in our diocese, Project Rachel. I have talked to a few women recently that are experiencing some difficult times in their own lives. They are in the midst of clinically diagnosed mental, behavioral and emotional illness. They see themselves as not good enough, are acting out of their sinfulness and are denying their goodness. I am hopeful that God's grace will reach their self identity, they will acknowledge their need for post-abortion healing, they will be reconciled and they will live out of hope. God has blessed our world with wonderful people who love and give hope to others who can't seem to find it on their own.

“Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end.”

- Lamentations 3:21-22

I also see hope in a young woman I met recently who is working to help bring peace in Baghdad, Iraq. Sheila talked of the constant fear lived by everyone in Baghdad; the civilians, the military, the missionaries, and the peace workers. Fear is real for anyone and everyone. Goodness is also real. Goodness is in anyone and in everyone. Fear can sometimes stifle us from experiencing the goodness of another. These are two ironic stories she told from her experiences in Baghdad. First, she met a Muslim Iraqi gentleman who told her a story from his youth. It seems that he had been playing on a wall that separated his family home from the property next door. One day he lost his balance and began to fall into the next yard. As he was falling, he thought about where he was falling. He landed in the middle of a Christian wedding celebration. In his fear he thought that they would kill him. They did not. They helped him up, had a laugh and sent him safely on his way.

Later, Sheila was working with a Muslim group towards peaceful teamwork. She thought it would be good to bridge a wall between her Catholic Christian family and this group. Sheila talked to her pastor about a meeting and he seemed agreeable. When she told him they would meet at a Muslim site he was concerned. He questioned her saying; we cannot go there, “we will be killed.” The meeting happened, no one was killed and an alliance was started. This young boy and the priest both had tremendous fear that their lives would be in danger. I feel great optimism in both stories about confronting fear and finding hope.

I am committed to finding hope for life in the ordinary and in the bigger issues of our world. I look for hope in crisis pregnancies, in the person on death row, and in people living amid the starvation, lack of sanitation and disease of abject poverty. I live in hope that I can make decisions in my own life whether it is ministry related, in my personal relationships, in my attention to care of the environment or in the catastrophic systems of violence of our world. God give us the hope and courage to see Your image in the dignity of every person.

—Peggy Gerovac

“Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is (human)-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.”

—Nelson Mandela, speaking at the launch of Britain's Make Poverty History campaign

A new well allows Shupikai to return to school

World Health Organization www.who.int

Shupikai, a shy 11-year-old in Zimbabwe's impoverished Binga district, had no choice but to drop out of school when her mother fell sick with tuberculosis and persistent diarrhea.

Her father was already ill from an unknown disease. Her younger sisters were just one and three years old, and had to be fed and cared for. Because her family did not have a latrine or refuse pit, everyone was at risk of contracting the disease that was causing her mother's diarrhea unless Shupikai swept up and buried the feces carefully. And because they did not have a well, several times a day Shupikai carried a huge 20-litre container to the bore-hole three kilometers away, pumped water with difficulty and then carried the heavy container on her head for the arduous 40-minute walk back home.



"If only water was close by, half my problems would be over."

When Shupikai was asked what could be done to ease her problems, she immediately exclaimed, "Water, water! If only water was close by, half my problems would be over. And if we had a latrine, my mother would have easy access to it. It would be easier to take care of my parents and sisters." A Hygiene, Water and Sanitation Program, the government of Zimbabwe, and Shupikai's community worked together to build both a well and a household latrine for her family. Her father molded bricks, dug the latrine pit and paid the builder in kind with goats and chickens. The pressures on Shupikai were eased so much that within a few months she had resumed school.

FYI: Poor water supply and sanitation causes 2.2 million deaths of children under the age of five each year.

Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty



This is the new campaign launched by the US Catholic Conference of Bishops. Cardinal Theodore McCarrick initiated the campaign by saying "We cannot teach that killing is wrong by killing. We cannot defend life by taking life." Here are two "wins" in the campaign against the death penalty in the U.S. First, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that the execution of children who committed their crimes before the age of eighteen is cruel and unusual punishment and thus violates the Eighth Amendment. Execution is no longer a sentence given to children who commit crimes in our country.

Second, here in Ohio the death sentence of Kenny Richey was overturned after 18 years on death row. The court said his legal counsel was not sufficient and there was not enough evidence in the trial to warrant the death penalty. This campaign can help our country to join every other country in the world, with the exception of three, to be free of death penalty and its turning from human dignity.

by Peggy Gerovac

St. Anthony Messenger Press has a short booklet available called Catholics and the Death Penalty: Six Things You Can Do to End Capital Punishment. Check it out.

Debt Cancellation Praised

VATICAN CITY, JUNE 12, 2005 (Zenit.org)



The Vatican's semiofficial newspaper applauded the decision by the Group of Eight industrialized nations to cancel the foreign debt of 18 of the world's poorest countries.

Today's Italian edition of L'Osservatore Romano reported on the G8 finance ministers meeting in London and recalled that Pope John Paul II presented this "stage" to the international community "as a goal of civilization."

British Treasury chief Gordon Brown announced on Saturday that the G8 agreed to cancel the debt of Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

The deal is designed to scrap all of the \$40 billion those countries owe to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Bank.

"The cancellation of the foreign debt of developing countries is no longer a mirage," said L'Osservatore Romano.

The British Minister made the announcement at the end of the two-day meeting of the G8's finance and treasury officials.

The conference was held in preparation for a G8 summit July 6-8 in Scotland.

Volume 11

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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



Upcoming Events . . .

Sat., Aug. 13—Womankind 30th Anniversary Celebration—An open house/homecoming at 5400 Transportation Blvd., Garfield Hts. from noon to 4 pm. Tours, refreshments, raffles. Open to all. Call 216-662-5700 if you plan to attend.

Thurs., Sept. 8—The Culture of Life Series First program will celebrate the Nativity of Mary with guest speaker, Jerry Faust of Notre Dame football. His lecture is entitled, *The Greatest Trips I've Ever Made: Fatima, Lourdes and Medjugorje*. Join us at 7 pm at St. Clement Church, 14505 Madison Ave., Lakewood. For more info. call 216-226-6663.

Mon., July 11 & Wed., August 17—Cultural of Life—Planning meetings for the upcoming series. Call Virginia Hanley at 216-226-6663.

Sun., Oct. 2—Respect Life Sunday—Celebrate the gift of life and sanctity of the human person at the Sorrowful Mother Shrine, 4106 State Route 269, Bellevue, Ohio 44811. Mass at 11 am; confessions available 1/2 hr. prior to mass; cafeteria open for lunch. For more info. call 419-483-3435 or visit www.sorrowfulmothershrine.com

St. Julie Billiart Monthly Prayer Vigil at Family Planning Services in No. Ridgeville—3rd Saturday of the month from 11 am-noon. Contact St. Julie's for more information at 440-327-1978.

Speakers Bureau available from Pro Life Office.
Excellent programs on End of Life, Stem Cell,
as well as all other Consistent Ethic of Life topics.
Call 216-334-2965.

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



Special Needs . . .

West Side Catholic Center (3135 Lorain Road, Cleveland, OH 44113) is currently in need of the following items. Please call 216-631-4741 if you can help.

- Men's clothes (*in season, please*), especially jeans, pants, coats, hats, shoes, t-shirts
- Men's, women's, children's socks and underwear
- Sheets; towels; toiletries; duffle bags/backpacks
- Small working appliances; silverware
- Twin-sized air mattresses; children's art supplies

Bethesda—The House of Mercy "Wish List"

Please call 1-800-482-4100 if you can help with the following:

- Portable sound system to mike and tape talks
- Postage stamps
- Gift cards to Office Max



Websites of Interest . . .

Bethesda—The House of Mercy

"A community of hope and healing for those suffering after abortion."

www.bethesdathehouseofmercy.org

Cleveland Pregnancy Center

www.clevelandpregnancyhelp.org

Ohio's Death Row (By Fr. Neil Kookoothe)

www.ohiodeathrow.com

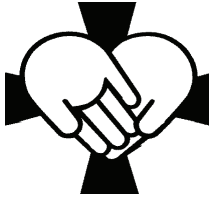
Making Every Day Earth Day

www.earth911.org

Join the USCCB Post Card Campaign

www.endroe.org

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 2323



Stem Cell Legislation

An excerpt from *Catholic Trends*, Vol. 35, Issue 23, June 4, 2005

The U.S. House approved legislation May 24 to lift the president's restrictions on federal funding of stem-cell research involving human-embryo destruction, despite the threat of a Bush veto and the moral objections of church leaders. Paradoxically, immediately after its 238-194 vote for the Stem-Cell Research Enhancement Act, the House approved a bill promoting increased stem-cell research using umbilical cord blood. In a letter to House members before the votes, Baltimore Cardinal William Keeler, chairman of the U.S. bishops' pro-life committee, said that unlike the false expectations raised by embryonic stem-cell research, studies using umbilical cord blood retrieved immediately after life births showed results in treating more than 60 diseases.



Aids Update

An excerpt from *Catholic Trends*, Vol 35, Issue 23, June 4, 2005



The culture of life encompasses efforts to ensure that babies of HIV-positive women are born healthy and that their mothers survive to raise them, Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, said May 27 at an international conference sponsored by the Rose-based lay Community of Sant'Egidio on preventing AIDS among children in Africa. Since 2002, Sant'Egidio has provided free HIV testing to 30,000 people in six African nations. Of these people, 11,000 tested HIV-positive; 5,000 are receiving free drug therapy. Two Sant'Egidio physicians said that in their program "more than 1,100 babies have been born healthy to HIV-positive mothers, and the transmission rate is less than 2 percent." Without treatment, the mother-to-child transmission rate is about 35 percent, and the mother's life expectancy is drastically reduced.



... Did you know?

- In Cleveland, more than 30 percent of the population lives below the poverty level.
- 56% of people requesting food assistance in the U.S. during the past year were children.
- 70% of the 27 cities surveyed report an increase in requests for emergency shelter.
- An applicant for public housing waits an average of 20 months for assistance.
- Low-income households spend up to 45% of their income on housing.

Source: "The U.S. Conference of Mayors: Hunger and Homelessness Survey 2004."

Innovative Crisis Pregnancy Support

U.S. Catholic, March 2005

A grant program for single parents to attend Marian College in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin has received new funds totaling almost \$1 million. The program, started in 2002, awards economically disadvantaged single parents with funds for tuition, rent, child care, and other living expenses for four years. The grantee must maintain high academic standards, as well as give 20 hours of volunteer service per semester, according to Catholic New Service. The college's array of support services are also available to grantees, including personal and career counseling, tutoring, and mentoring.



Pro Life Website

by Peggy Gerovac

Have you visited
www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife lately?
You might find interesting thoughts to ponder.

The website is the mass communication for the Pro Life Office. When there is a current event worth noting or some type of suggested action item, I update the website as soon as possible. Some recent additions to the website were the recent post card campaign by the USCCB, the letter announcing the U. S. Bishops campaign against the death penalty, and the United Nations declaration against human cloning. The Pro Life Office has access to tremendous amounts of information on upholding the dignity of the human person and the website is the easiest and quickest way for me to share it with anyone.

You will find that I am diligently trying to keep the website Catholic. Since the Pro Life Office is designed to support and educate on Catholic issues, it is my intention to use documents and websites endorsed by the official Church or administered by the official Church. This means that if you are looking for information from the science, legal or advocacy arenas you will find limited resources on this site. The website is quite extensive and was developed before I was here, so if you go looking, you will probably find that I am somewhere below my goal of using only official endorsements.

Now, what might you find, are over thirty two pages of articles and links on the website. You can find information on beginning of life, end of life, morality, and healing. Two additional pages in my planning mind are the environment and poverty. The environment and poverty have so many affects on the dignity of the person and often directly affect the other issues.

Come and see. Let me know what you think. Send me an email at pmgerovac@dioceseofcleveland.org.

Project Rachel—What's New?

by Peggy Gerovac



I'd like to start a quarterly installment about the very important ministry of the Pro Life Office, Project Rachel. "This diocesan based ministry is composed of a network of specially trained clergy, spiritual directors and therapists who provide compassionate one-on-one care to those who are struggling with the aftermath of abortion. Project Rachel is designed to provide confidential and skilled help to each individual who comes to the ministry."

The Diocese of Cleveland has an active ministry for this post-abortion healing. We have numerous trained clergy and lay individual who provide the one-on-one care. The Pro Life Office is the contact referral resource. Training and ministry support are also provided by the office.

Please remember to refer those who are troubled from the aftermath of abortion to Project Rachel. We are open and willing to caring for those women in need. The ministry is completely confidential and the diocese requests no personal identity information, so no records are kept.

Check out the website for more information and wait for future installments in the newsletter.

Discovering my own wounds

An excerpt by Jean Vanier from "The Heart of L'Arche"

If, at times, some people with handicaps awakened a new tenderness in me, and it was a joy to be with them, at different moments others awakened my anger and defensiveness. I was frightened that they might touch my vulnerability. I felt agitated and ill at ease with them, just the opposite of the peace and openness I needed to be present to them. It is hard to admit to the darkness, fears, anguish, confusion and psychological hatred in our own hearts, all that hides our past hurts and reveals our inability to love. If we love only those who love and affirm us, is that really love? Is it not simply self-love? How can we learn to get out of ourselves and be open to those who cry out their anguish, who need to be loved but upset us and awaken our own anguish? For those who, like me, have always been able to do what they like and have always succeeded, it is difficult; at the same time it can be a real source of salvation to discover our poverty and our powerlessness, and to be confronted by failure.



An Open Letter from The Catholic Coalition of Parish Pro-Life Representatives

Supporting Catholic Teaching on Broad Spectrum Pro-Life Issues

To: Catholic pro-life activists

We are a group of parish pro-life representatives in the Cleveland Diocese who have joined together to work for a Culture of Life. Our philosophy, history and goals are outlined in this brochure. Please look it over and consider joining us in this most important work, always remembering that, when it comes to matters of human life, we are standing on sacred ground.

PHILOSOPHY—The Catholic Coalition of Parish Pro-life Representatives (CCPPR) believes that human life is sacred because it is a gift from God and is in the image and likeness of God. We believe that the destruction of human life, for any reason, is a grave moral evil. We believe that positive, life-affirming solutions exist for every pro-death "solution" to human problems. We believe that these life-affirming solutions are the ones that we must give sacrificially of our time, talent and treasure to implement.

We take a broad spectrum approach to all life issues and rely on *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* and *Gospel of Life* to define our stand on these issues. Abortion is the central issue because that is where life is being attacked in the greatest numbers and at its most innocent and defenseless point. However, other life issues, such as euthanasia, the death penalty, and war, must be addressed. Also, related issues such as chastity, crisis pregnancies, post-abortion healing, bioethics and human sexuality must be dealt with if we are to be truly a culture of life.

HISTORY—In the summer of 2003, a small group of people met to work on a series of lectures that would educate Catholic adults on the Church's teachings in different areas of pro-life concerns. We called ourselves the Catholic Coalition of Parish Pro-life Representatives (CCPPR) and we put together a total of six lectures called the *Cultural of Life Series*. We are proud to say that, in some way or other, we managed to touch on all the broad spectrum pro-life issues in that first Culture of Life Series. We continued on in 2004-2005, addressing the issues of spiritual warfare, pro-life feminism and human sexuality from a Catholic perspective.

Our "litmus test" for the speakers we chose was that they had to be experts in their field, passionate about their subject, and true to the magisterial teaching of the Catholic Church. We are again proud to say that we turned out a fantastic group of speakers in the first two years of our existence.

GOALS—

- To sponsor pro-life programs in the Greater Cleveland area aimed at educating adults on the full spectrum of pro-life concerns.
- To assist the Pro-Life Office of the Diocese of Cleveland in every way possible and whenever asked to do so.
- To make pro-life literature available to parishioners.

AN INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP

Please consider joining us in this important work. Membership in the CCPPR is open to all Catholics who agree with our philosophy and want to work toward a Culture of Life. We meet as needed to plan activities. Members are informed of the time and location of these meetings by mail and/or telephone. Please call 216-226-6663 if you want to join in our work, always remembering that we are, in matters of human life,

STANDING ON SACRED GROUND.

"Genetic engineering may help eliminate hereditary diseases, but it may also undermine our humanity by attempting to create a super race."

—Kenneth R. Overberg, S.J.