



Walking with
Moms in Need
a year of service



Evangelium Vitae

with special guest Dr. Ryan J. Brady

Walking with Moms Webinar

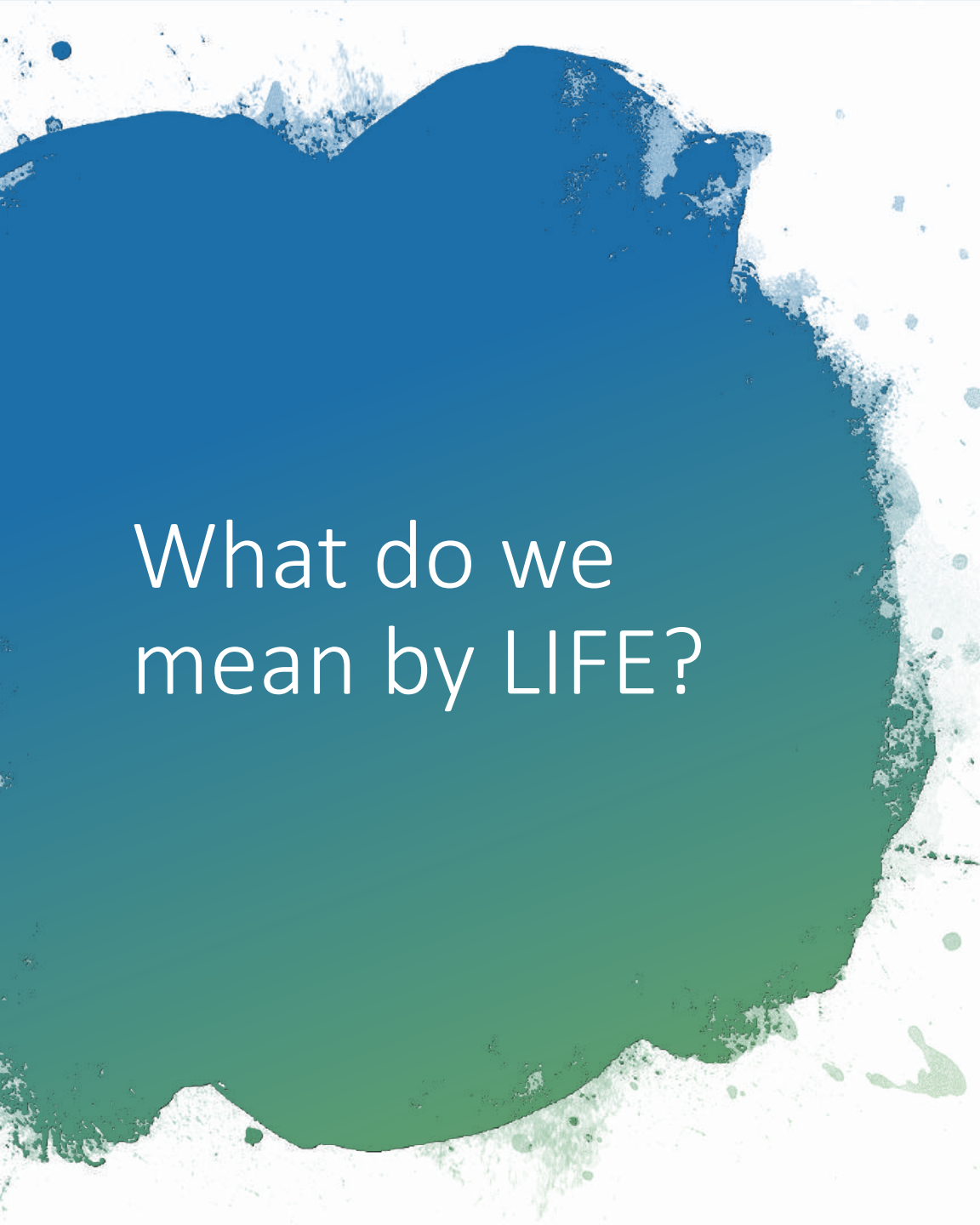
October 22, 2020 | *feast of Pope St. John Paul II*



The Gospel of Life

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Introduction



What do we mean by LIFE?

JPII starts by explaining what we mean by life, in light of Christ:

- The life we're called to exceeds the dimensions of earthly existence, because it consists in sharing the life of God.
- This supernatural vocation reveals the greatness and inestimable value of human life even in its temporal phase.
- But also reveals the relative character of each individual's earthly life...
- "Even so, it remains a sacred reality entrusted to us, to be preserved with a sense of responsibility and brought to perfection in love and in the gift of ourselves to God and to our brothers and sisters."



For whom is the Gospel of Life meant?

- “**Every person** sincerely open to truth and goodness can by the light of reason and the hidden action of grace, come to recognize in the natural law written in the heart the sacred value of human life from its very beginning until its end, and can affirm the right of every human being to have this primary good respected to the highest degree. Upon the recognition of this right, **every human community** and **the political community** itself are founded.”
- **In a special way, Christians** must defend and promote this right.
- Every individual is entrusted to the maternal care of **the Church**.
- [Crimes and attacks against human life] “do more harm to **those who practice them** than to **those who suffer the injury**.”



Why is it so important at this time?

- A new ***cultural climate*** is developing and taking hold, which gives crimes against life a new and even more sinister character
- “...broad sectors of **public opinion** justify certain crimes against life in the name of the rights of individual freedom...”
- The fact that **legislation** in many countries has determined not to punish these practices against life, and even to make them altogether legal, is both a disturbing symptom and significant cause of ***grave moral decline***.
- “*Today there exists a great multitude of weak and defenseless human beings, unborn children in particular, whose fundamental right to life is being trampled upon.*”



What is the purpose of this encyclical?

- “***a precise and vigorous reaffirmation*** of the value of human life and its inviolability”
- “***a pressing appeal*** addressed to each and every person, in the name of God:

respect, protect, love and serve life, every human life! Only in this direction will you find justice, development, true freedom, peace and happiness!”

- “...for the good of every man and woman and for the destiny of the whole of society!”
- ***a commitment to support the family*** as the sanctuary of life.
- To offer the world new signs of hope, and work to ensure that justice and solidarity will increase and that a new culture of human life will be affirmed for the building of an authentic civilization of truth and love.

Chapter One

Present Day Threats to Human Life



The roots of violence against life

- Death came into the world as a result of the devil's envy and the sin of our first parents (n.7)
- The first murder: "Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him" Gen 4:8
- Life, especially human life, belongs only to God: for this reason whoever attacks human life, in some way attacks God himself. (n.9)

Abortion & Contraception

- Concentrates on attacks affecting life in its earliest and in its final stages:
 - From crimes to rights with legal recognition
 - Strike at human life at the time of its greatest frailty
 - Most often carried out in the very heart of & with the complicity of the family
- Expanding abortion pharmaceutically, and through chemical contraceptives and IUDs that act as abortifacients
- Relationship between abortion & contraception: contraceptive mentality strengthens the temptation of abortion when contraception fails.





Artificial Reproduction, Prenatal Diagnosis, & Euthanasia

- Artificial reproduction: Morally unacceptable not only because it separates the procreative and unitive aspects of the marital act but also due to the production of embryos
- Prenatal diagnosis too often becomes an opportunity for abortion, and even infanticide is being justified by handicap or illness (14)
- Threats to incurably ill and dying (euthanasia):
 - In a social and cultural context which makes it more difficult to face and accept suffering, the temptation is to eliminate it by hastening death...
 - “there exists in contemporary culture a certain Promethean attitude which leads people to think that they can control life and death by taking the decisions about them into their own hands.” (15)

A perverse idea of freedom

- What have you done? God asks Cain to recognize motives and consequences (18)
- ***Yes, every man is his brother's keeper***, because God entrusts us to one another. (19)
- To claim the right to abortion, infanticide and euthanasia, and to recognize that right in law, means to attribute to human freedom a perverse and evil significance: that of an absolute power over others and against others. This is the death of true freedom: "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin" (Jn 8:34). (20)



What is the cause?



- **When the sense of God is lost, there is also a tendency to lose the sense of man, of his dignity and his life;** in turn, the systematic violation of the moral law, especially in the serious matter of respect for human life and its dignity, produces a kind of progressive darkening of the capacity to discern God's living and saving presence. (21)
- Enclosed in the narrow horizon of his physical nature, he is somehow reduced to being "a thing", and no longer grasps the "transcendent" character of his "existence as man". He no longer considers life as a splendid gift of God, something "sacred" entrusted to his responsibility and thus also to his loving care and "veneration". Life itself becomes a mere "thing", which man claims as his exclusive property, completely subject to his control and manipulation. (22)
- Thus, in relation to life at birth or at death, man is no longer capable of posing the question of the truest meaning of his own existence, nor can he assimilate with genuine freedom these crucial moments of his own history. He is concerned only with "doing", and, using all kinds of technology, he busies himself with programming, controlling and dominating birth and death. Birth and death, instead of being primary experiences demanding to be "lived", become things to be merely "possessed" or "rejected". (22)
- There is a truth of creation which must be acknowledged, or a plan of God for life which must be respected... (22)
- It is clear that **the loss of contact with God's wise design is the deepest root of modern man's confusion...** By living "as if God did not exist", man not only loses sight of the mystery of God, but also of the mystery of the world and the mystery of his own being. (22)



Consequence: *depersonalization*

- The eclipse of the sense of God and of man inevitably leads to a practical materialism, which breeds individualism, utilitarianism and hedonism. (23)
- The body is no longer perceived as a properly personal reality, a sign and place of relations with others, with God and with the world. It is reduced to pure materiality: it is simply a complex of organs, functions and energies to be used according to the sole criteria of pleasure and efficiency.
- Sexuality too is depersonalized and exploited: from being the sign, place and language of love, that is, of the gift of self and acceptance of another, in all the other's richness as a person, it increasingly becomes the occasion and instrument for self-assertion and the selfish satisfaction of personal desires and instincts.
- The two meanings, unitive and procreative, inherent in the very nature of the conjugal act are artificially separated. Procreation then becomes the "enemy" to be avoided in sexual activity: if it is welcomed, this is only because it expresses a desire, or indeed the intention, to have a child "at all costs", and not because it signifies the complete acceptance of the other and therefore an openness to the richness of life which the child represents. (23)

Signs of hope

- By contemplating the precious blood of Christ, the sign of his self-giving love (cf. Jn 13:1), the believer learns to recognize and appreciate the almost divine dignity of every human being (25)
- Christ's blood reveals to man that his greatness, and therefore his vocation, consists in the sincere gift of self.
- Modern society in fact has the means of effectively suppressing crime by rendering criminals harmless without definitively denying them the chance to reform.
- We find ourselves not only "faced with" but necessarily "in the midst of" this conflict: we are all involved and we all share in it, with the inescapable responsibility of choosing to be unconditionally pro-life.
- The unconditional choice for life reaches its full religious and moral meaning when it flows from, is formed by and nourished by faith in Christ. (28)



Chapter Two

Reflection on the Christian Message Concerning Life

Life in Christ

- The Gospel of life is something concrete and personal, for it consists in the proclamation of the very person of Jesus. (29)
- "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (Jn 11:25-26).
- Through the words, the actions and the very person of Jesus, man is given the possibility of "knowing" the complete truth concerning the value of human life. From this "source" he receives, in particular, the capacity to "accomplish" this truth perfectly (cf. Jn 3:21), that is, to accept and fulfil completely the responsibility of loving and serving, of defending and promoting human life. (29)
- In Jesus, the "Word of life", God's eternal life is thus proclaimed and given. Thanks to this proclamation and gift, our physical and spiritual life, also in its earthly phase, acquires its full value and meaning, for God's eternal life is in fact the end to which our living in this world is directed and called. In this way the Gospel of life includes everything that human experience and reason tell us about the value of human life, accepting it, purifying it, exalting it and bringing it to fulfilment. (n.30)



Life in Faith

- The fullness of the Gospel message about life was prepared for in the Old Testament.
- Especially in the events of the Exodus, the center of the Old Testament faith experience, Israel discovered the preciousness of its life in the eyes of God. Thus, in coming to know the value of its own existence as a people, Israel also grows in its perception of the meaning and value of life itself.
- More than anything else, it is the problem of suffering which challenges faith and puts it to the test. (Job)
- Revelation progressively allows the first notion of immortal life planted by the Creator in the human heart to be grasped with ever greater clarity: "He has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man's mind" (Ec 3:11).





The fulfilment of life's meaning

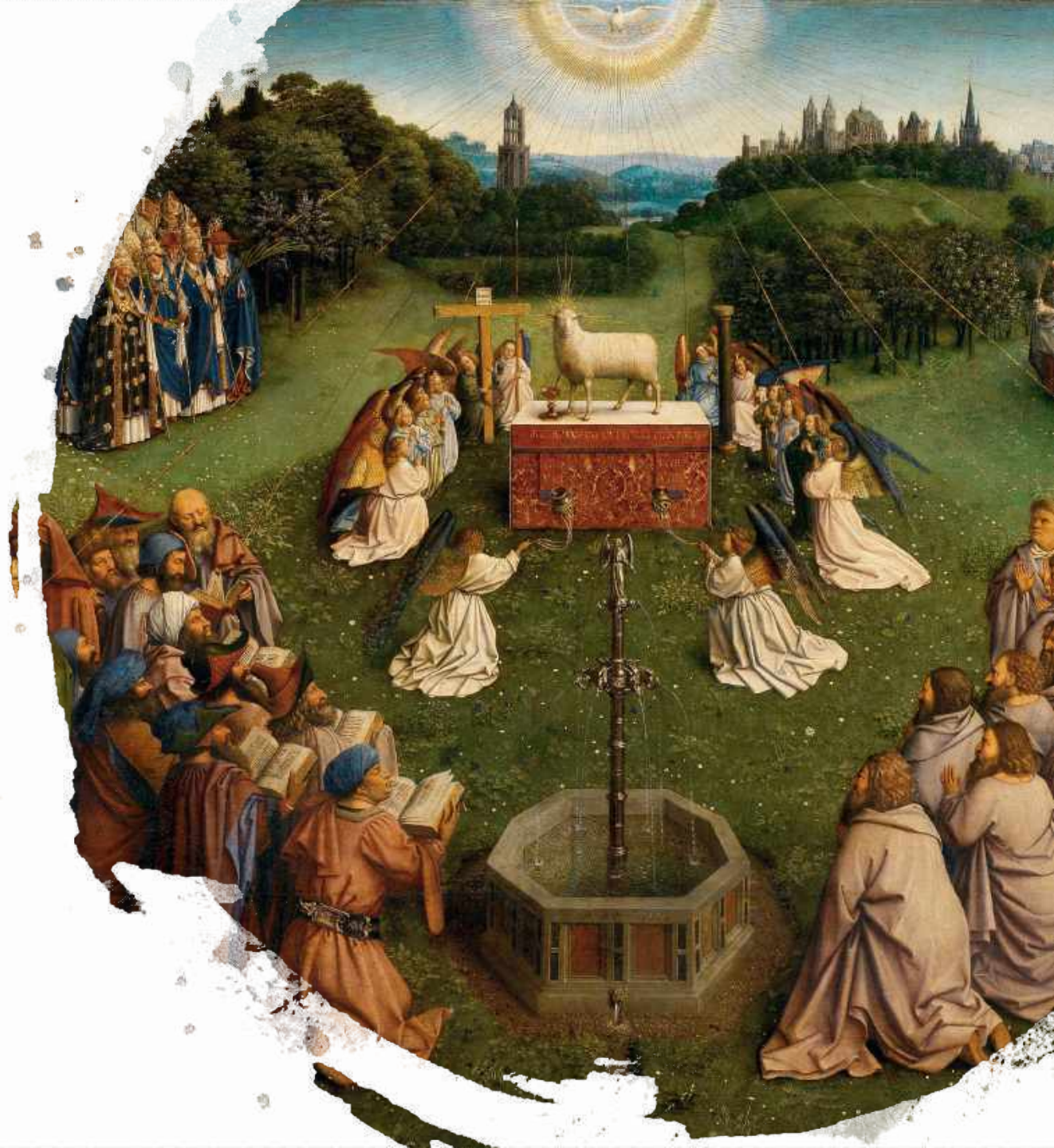
- "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them" (Lk 7:22). The crowds of the sick and the outcasts who follow Jesus and seek him out (cf. Mt 4:23-25) find in his words and actions a revelation of the great value of their lives and of how their hope of salvation is well-founded.
- The apostles and the Church continued Christ's mission, but only those who recognize that their life is marked by the evil of sin can discover in an encounter with Jesus the Saviour the truth and the authenticity of their own existence.
- Jesus shared in the lowliest and most vulnerable conditions of human life (cf. Phil 2:6-7). In his journeying amid contradictions and in the very loss of his life, Jesus is guided by the certainty that his life is in the hands of the Father. Consequently, on the Cross, he can say to him: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit!" (Lk 23:46), that is, my life. Truly great must be the value of human life if the Son of God has taken it up and made it the instrument of the salvation of all humanity!



- In answering the question “why is life good?” St. John Paul II starts by explaining why human life is unique: man alone, among all visible creatures, is "capable of knowing and loving his Creator".[24](#)
- Dissatisfaction marks man's life in Eden among the plants and animals (cf. Gen 2:20) until the appearance of woman. In the other, whether man or woman, there is a reflection of God himself, the definitive goal and fulfilment of every person.
- "What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? You have made him little less than a god, and crown him with glory and honor" (Ps 8:5).
- The disobedience of Adam had ruined and marred God's plan for human life and introduced death into the world, but the redemptive obedience of Christ is the source of grace poured out upon the human race, opening wide to everyone the gates of the kingdom of life (cf. Rom 5:12-21).

Gift of eternal life

- "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. ... Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:1-2).
- Here the Christian truth about life becomes most sublime. The dignity of this life is linked not only to its beginning, to the fact that it comes from God, but also to its final end, to its destiny of fellowship with God in knowledge and love of him. In the light of this truth Saint Irenaeus qualifies and completes his praise of man: **"the glory of God" is indeed, "man, living man", but "the life of man consists in the vision of God".**^{[27](#)}
- Although man instinctively loves life because it is a good, this love will find further inspiration and strength, and new breadth and depth, in the divine dimensions of this good. Similarly, the love which every human being has for life cannot be reduced simply to a desire to have sufficient space for self-expression and for entering into relationships with others; rather, it develops in a joyous awareness that life can become the "place" where God manifests himself, where we meet him and enter into communion with him. The life which Jesus gives in no way lessens the value of our existence in time; it takes it and directs it to its final destiny.



Reverence and love for every human life



- "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?", Jesus replies: "If you would enter life, keep the commandments" (Mt 19:16,17). And he quotes, as the first of these: "You shall not kill" (Mt 19:18). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus demands from his disciples a righteousness which surpasses that of the Scribes and Pharisees, also with regard to respect for life: "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment'. But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment" (Mt 5:21-22).
- The inviolability of human life was already recognized in the Old Testament, but with Jesus these requirements assume new force and urgency, and are revealed in all their breadth and depth.
- The deepest element of God's commandment to protect human life is the requirement to show reverence and love for every person and the life of every person.
- "The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet', and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'. Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom 13:9-10).

Man's responsibility for life

- The sharing by man in God's lordship is evident in his responsibility towards the environment in which he lives, towards the creation which God has put at the service of his personal dignity and life, but also in the **specific responsibility which he is given for human life**, which reaches its highest point in the giving of life **through procreation by man and woman in marriage**.
- Aware that God has intervened, Eve exclaims: "I have begotten a man with the help of the Lord" (Gen 4:1). In procreation therefore, through the communication of life from parents to child, God's own image and likeness is transmitted, thanks to the creation of the immortal soul. [32](#)
- **The task of accepting and serving life involves everyone**; and this task must be fulfilled above all towards life when it is at its weakest. It is Christ himself who reminds us of this when he asks to be loved and served in his brothers and sisters who are suffering in any way: the hungry, the thirsty, the foreigner, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned ... Whatever is done to each of them is done to Christ himself (cf. Mt 25:31-46).



Dignity of the unborn child

- "Human life finds itself most vulnerable when it enters the world and when it leaves the realm of time to embark upon eternity."
- "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you" (Jer 1:5): the life of every individual, from its very beginning, is part of God's plan.
- Job, from the depth of his pain, stops to contemplate the work of God who miraculously formed his body in his mother's womb. Here he finds reason for trust, and he expresses his belief that there is a divine plan for his life (Job 10:8-12).
- The mother of the seven brothers professed her faith in God, both the source and guarantee of life from its very conception: "I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws" (2 Mac 7:22-23).
- The value of the person from the moment of conception is celebrated in the meeting between the Virgin Mary and Elizabeth, and between the two children whom they are carrying in the womb.



Life in old age and in times of suffering

- Old age is characterized by dignity and surrounded with reverence (cf. 2 Mac 6:23). The just man does not seek to be delivered from old age and its burden; on the contrary his prayer is this: "You, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth ... so even to old age and grey hairs, O God, do not forsake me, till I proclaim your might to all the generations to come" (Ps 71:5, 18).
- How should one face the inevitable decline of life? How should one act in the face of death? The believer knows that his life is in the hands of God, he has to entrust himself completely to His loving plan.
- In moments of sickness too, man is called to have the same trust in the Lord
- The life of the body in its earthly state is not an absolute good for the believer, especially as he may be asked to give up his life for a greater good. As Jesus says: "Whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mk 8:35).
- Examples: John the Baptist, Christ Himself, St. Stephen, the first of a countless host of martyrs whom the Church has venerated since the very beginning.
- No one, however, can arbitrarily choose whether to live or die; the absolute master of such a decision is the Creator alone, in whom "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

From the law of Sinai to the gift of the Spirit



- The history of Israel shows how difficult it is to remain faithful to the Law of life which God has inscribed in human hearts and which he gave on Sinai to the people of the Covenant.
- "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you" (Ezek 36:25-26; cf. Jer 31:34).
- This "new heart" will make it possible to appreciate and achieve the deepest and most authentic meaning of life: namely, that of being a gift which is fully realized in the giving of self.
- It is in the coming of Jesus of Nazareth that the Law is fulfilled and that a new heart is given through his Spirit.
- **"The law of the Spirit** of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:2), and its fundamental expression, following the example of the Lord who gave his life for his friends (cf. Jn 15:13), **is the gift of self in love for one's brothers and sisters:** "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 Jn 3:14). This is the law of freedom, joy and blessedness.

the Gospel of life is brought to fulfilment on the Cross

- By his death, Jesus sheds light on the meaning of the life and death of every human being.
- By looking upon the one who was pierced, every person whose life is threatened encounters the sure hope of finding freedom and redemption.
- The "giving up" of the spirit describes Jesus' death, a death like that of every other human being, but it also seems to allude to the "gift of the Spirit", by which Jesus ransoms us from death and opens before us a new life.
- It is the very life of God which is now shared with man. It is the life which through the Sacraments of the Church-symbolized by the blood and water flowing from Christ's side-is continually given to God's children, making them the people of the New Covenant. From the Cross, the source of life, the "people of life" is born and increases.
- He who had come "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45), attains on the Cross the heights of love: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13). And he died for us while we were yet sinners (cf. Rom 5:8).
- In this way Jesus proclaims that life finds its center, its meaning and its fulfilment when it is given up.
- We too are called to give our lives for our brothers and sisters, and thus to realize in the fullness of truth the meaning and destiny of our existence.



Chapter Three

God's Holy Law




"If you would enter life, keep the commandments" (Mt 19:17): Gospel and commandment

- "And behold, one came up to him, saying, Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?' " (Mt 19:6). Jesus replied, "If you would enter life, keep the commandments" (Mt 19:17).
- The Teacher is speaking about eternal life, that is, a sharing in the life of God himself.
- This life is attained through the observance of the Lord's commandments, including the commandment "You shall not kill."
- This is the first precept from the Decalogue which Jesus quotes to the young man who asks him what commandments he should observe: "Jesus said, 'You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal...' " (Mt 19:18).

Human Dignity

- Man, as the living image of God, is willed by his Creator to be ruler and lord.
- Saint Gregory of Nyssa writes that "God made man capable of carrying out his role as king of the earth ... Man was created in the image of the One who governs the universe. Everything demonstrates that from the beginning man's nature was marked by royalty... Man is a king. Created to exercise dominion over the world, he was given a likeness to the king of the universe; he is the living image who participates by his dignity in the perfection of the divine archetype".[38](#)
- Called to be fruitful and multiply, to subdue the earth and to exercise dominion over other lesser creatures (cf. Gen 1:28), man is ruler and lord not only over things but especially over himself, [39](#) and in a certain sense, over the life which he has received and which he is able to transmit through procreation, carried out with love and respect for God's plan



Reason is a measured measure

- Man's lordship however is not absolute...: it is a real reflection of the unique and infinite lordship of God. Hence man must exercise it with wisdom and love, sharing in the boundless wisdom and love of God. And this comes about through obedience to God's holy Law: a free and joyful obedience (cf. Ps 119), born of and fostered by an awareness that the precepts of the Lord are a gift of grace entrusted to man always and solely for his good, for the preservation of his personal dignity and the pursuit of his happiness.
- With regard to things, but even more with regard to life, man is not the absolute master and final judge, but rather-and this is where his incomparable greatness lies-he is the "minister of God's plan"

human life is sacred and inviolable

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image (Gen 9:5).

- 53. "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God', and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being".⁴¹ With these words the Instruction Donum Vitae sets forth the central content of God's revelation on the sacredness and inviolability of human life.

The Image of God and the Entrance of Death

- God proclaims that he is absolute Lord of the life of man, who is formed in his image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26-28). Human life is thus given a sacred and inviolable character, which reflects the inviolability of the Creator himself. Precisely for this reason God will severely judge every violation of the commandment "You shall not kill", the commandment which is at the basis of all life together in society.
- God thus shows that he does not delight in the death of the living (cf. Wis 1:13). Only Satan can delight therein: for through his envy death entered the world (cf. Wis 2:24). He who is "a murderer from the beginning", is also "a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8:44). By deceiving man he leads him to projects of sin and death, making them appear as goals and fruits of life.





The Way of Life

- From the beginning, the living Tradition of the Church-as shown by the Didache, the most ancient non-biblical Christian writing-categorically repeated the commandment "You shall not kill": "There are two ways, a way of life and a way of death; there is a great difference between them... In accordance with the precept of the teaching: you shall not kill ... you shall not put a child to death by abortion nor kill it once it is born ...

Respect for Life and Self-Defense

- Moreover, "legitimate defence can be not only a right but a grave duty for someone responsible for another's life, the common good of the family or of the State".⁴⁴ Unfortunately it happens that the need to render the aggressor incapable of causing harm sometimes involves taking his life. In this case, the fatal outcome is attributable to the aggressor whose action brought it about, even though he may not be morally responsible because of a lack of the use of reason. ⁴⁵
- 56. This is the context in which to place the problem of the death penalty...
- the nature and extent of the punishment must be carefully evaluated and decided upon, and ought not go to the extreme of executing the offender except in cases of absolute necessity: in other words, when it would not be possible otherwise to defend society. Today however, as a result of steady improvements in the organization of the penal system, such cases are very rare, if not practically non-existent.

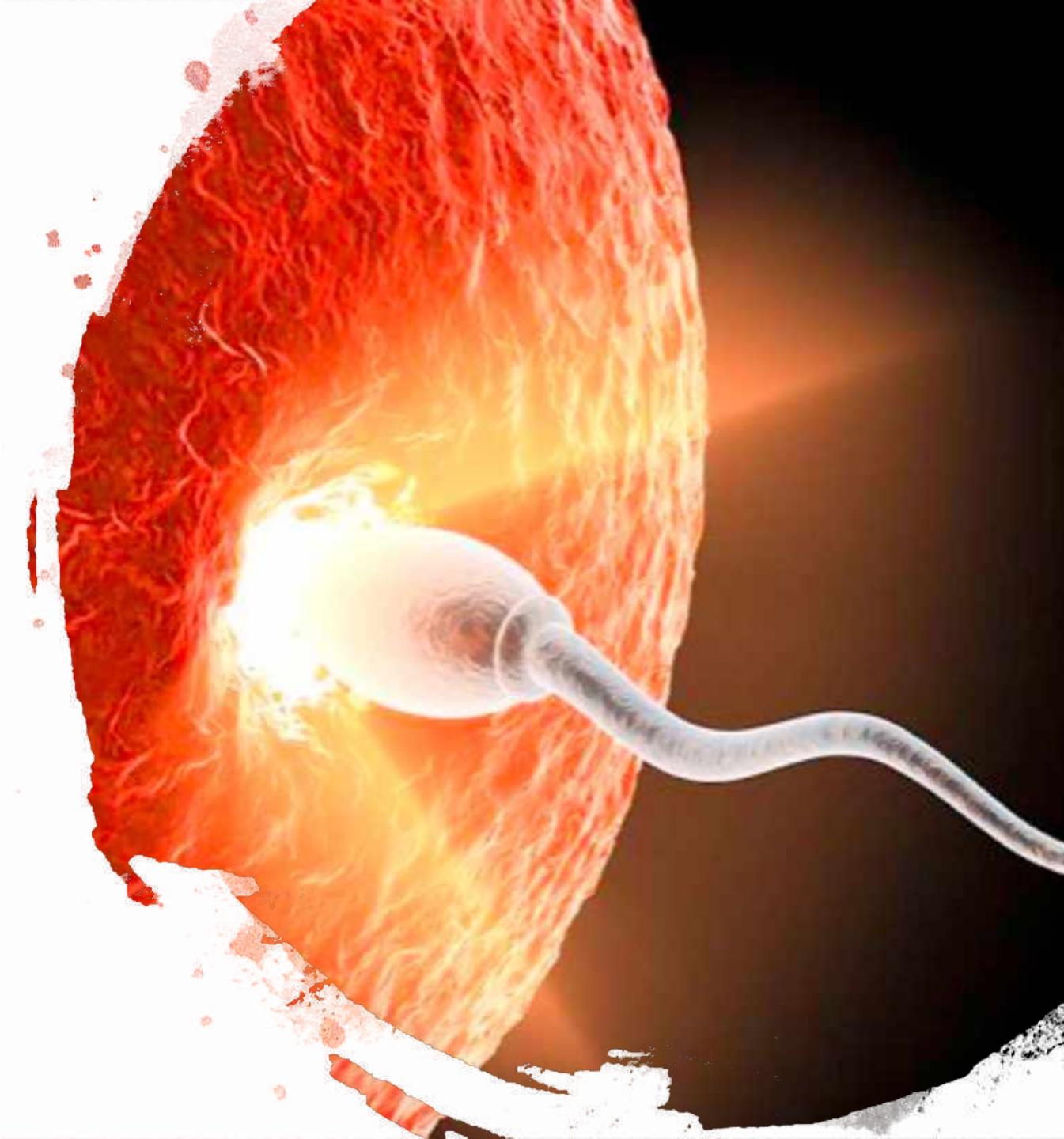


Abortion is Gravely Immoral

- By the authority which Christ conferred upon Peter and his Successors, and in communion with the Bishops of the Catholic Church, I confirm that the direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being is always gravely immoral. This doctrine, based upon that unwritten law which man, in the light of reason, finds in his own heart (cf. Rom 2:14-15), is reaffirmed by Sacred Scripture, transmitted by the Tradition of the Church and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium.
- The deliberate decision to deprive an innocent human being of his life is always morally evil and can never be licit either as an end in itself or as a means to a good end. It is in fact a grave act of disobedience to the moral law, and indeed to God himself, the author and guarantor of that law; it contradicts the fundamental virtues of justice and charity. "Nothing and no one can in any way permit the killing of an innocent human being, whether a fetus or an embryo, an infant or an adult, an old person, or one suffering from an incurable disease, or a person who is dying. Furthermore, no one is permitted to ask for this act of killing, either for himself or herself or for another person entrusted to his or her care, nor can he or she consent to it, either explicitly or implicitly. Nor can any authority legitimately recommend or permit such an action."

Personhood from the Beginning

- **60.** Some people try to justify abortion by claiming that the result of conception, at least up to a certain number of days, cannot yet be considered a personal human life. But in fact, “from the time that the ovum is fertilized, a life is begun which is neither that of the father nor the mother; it is rather the life of a new human being with his own growth. It would never be made human (*humanus*) if it were not human already. This has always been clear, and... modern genetic science offers clear confirmation. It has demonstrated that from the first instant there is established the program of ~~what~~ this living being ~~will be~~: a person, this individual person with his characteristic aspects already well determined. Right from fertilization the adventure of a human life begins.





In Vitro Fertilization

- 63. This evaluation of the morality of abortion is to be applied also to the recent forms of intervention on human embryos which, although carried out for purposes legitimate in themselves, inevitably involve the killing of those embryos. This is the case with experimentation on embryos, which is becoming increasingly widespread in the field of biomedical research and is legally permitted in some countries... The use of human embryos or fetuses as an object of experimentation constitutes a crime against their dignity as human beings who have a right to the same respect owed to a child once born, just as to every person.
- This moral condemnation also regards procedures that exploit living human embryos and fetuses-sometimes specifically "produced" for this purpose by in vitro fertilization-either to be used as "biological material" or as providers of organs or tissue for transplants in the treatment of certain diseases. The killing of innocent human creatures, even if carried out to help others, constitutes an absolutely unacceptable act.
- No circumstance, no purpose, no law whatsoever can ever make licit an act which is intrinsically illicit, since it is contrary to the Law of God which is written in every human heart, knowable by reason itself, and proclaimed by the Church.

Chapter Four

For a New Culture of Human Life

What is our task?



PROCLAIM



CELEBRATE



SERVE

What are we proclaiming?

- Involves proclaiming:
 - the living God who is close to us, who calls us to profound communion with himself and awakens in us the certain hope of eternal life.
 - the inseparable connection between the person, his life and his bodiliness (integral view of the human person)
 - human life as a life of relationship, a gift of God, the fruit and sign of his love.
 - that Jesus has a unique relationship with every person, which enables us to see in every human face the face of Christ.
 - the call for a "sincere gift of self" as the fullest way to realize our personal freedom.
- It also involves making clear all the consequences of this Gospel:
 - human life, as a gift of God, is sacred and inviolable.
 - For this reason procured **abortion and euthanasia are absolutely unacceptable.**
 - Not only must human life not be taken, but it must be protected with loving concern.
 - The meaning of life is found in giving and receiving love, and in this light **human sexuality and procreation** reach their true and full significance.
 - **Love also gives meaning to suffering and death**– which can become redemptive
 - **Science and technology** should always be at the service of man and his integral development
 - **Society** as a whole must respect, defend and promote the dignity of every human person, at every moment and in every condition of that person's life. (n 81)

How do we proclaim it?

- To be truly a people at the service of life we must propose these truths constantly and courageously:
 - from the very first proclamation of the Gospel,
 - and thereafter in catechesis,
 - in the various forms of preaching,
 - in personal dialogue
 - and in all educational activity.
- "Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching" (2 Tim 4:2).
- May Paul's exhortation strike a chord in all theologians, pastors, teachers and in all those responsible for catechesis and the formation of consciences.
- In the proclamation of this Gospel, we must not fear hostility or unpopularity, and we must refuse any compromise or ambiguity which might conform us to the world's way of thinking (cf. Rom 12:2). We must be in the world but not of the world (cf. Jn 15:19; 17:16), drawing our strength from Christ.





Celebrating the Gospel of life

- Develop “a contemplative outlook”- reawaken wonder & awe
- Personal and communal prayer; liturgical celebrations; & an emphasis on the Sacraments, which make us sharers in divine life, and provide the spiritual strength necessary to experience life, suffering and death in their fullest meaning as a participation in the Paschal Mystery.
- An annual Day for Life to foster in individual consciences, in families, in the Church and in civil society a recognition of the meaning and value of human life at every stage and in every condition. (Particular attention should be drawn to the seriousness of abortion and euthanasia, without neglecting other aspects of life which from time to time deserve to be given careful consideration, as occasion and circumstances demand.)



Heroic Actions & Everyday Heroism

- Donation of organs, performed in an ethically acceptable manner, with a view to offering a chance of health and even of life itself to the sick who sometimes have no other hope.
- All those "brave mothers who devote themselves to their own family without reserve, who suffer in giving birth to their children and who are ready to make any effort, to face any sacrifice, in order to pass on to them the best of themselves".[111](#)
- In living out their mission "these heroic women do not always find support in the world around them. On the contrary, the cultural models frequently promoted and broadcast by the media do not encourage motherhood.
- We thank you, heroic mothers, for your invincible love! We thank you for your intrepid trust in God and in his love. We thank you for the sacrifice of your life ... In the Paschal Mystery, Christ restores to you the gift you gave him. Indeed, he has the power to give you back the life you gave him as an offering".[112](#)

Serving the Gospel of life: **CHARITY**

- Every Christian community, with a renewed sense of responsibility, must the service of charity through various kinds of pastoral and social activity.
- **At the first stage of life, centers for natural methods of regulating fertility; Marriage and family counseling** agencies.
- **Newborn life** is served by centers of assistance where new life receives a welcome and many unmarried mothers and couples in difficulty discover new hope and find assistance and support in overcoming hardship and the fear of accepting new life.
- **Other Conditions:** treating drug addiction, caring for minors, the mentally ill, AIDS patients, and those with disabilities are eloquent expressions of what charity is able to devise in order to give everyone new reasons for hope and practical possibilities for life.
- **End of life:** the elderly, especially those who can no longer look after themselves, and the terminally ill enjoy genuinely humane assistance and receive an adequate response to their needs, in particular their anxiety and their loneliness, from their **families**, who can also receive much help from social welfare agencies and, if necessary, palliative care.



- **Hospitals, clinics and convalescent homes** should be places where suffering, pain and death are acknowledged and understood in their human and specifically Christian meaning (esp. for Catholic institutions).
- **Unique responsibility of health-care personnel;** conscientious objection in relation to procured abortion and euthanasia
- **Politics/ Legislation:** laws play a very important and sometimes decisive role in influencing thought and behavior. “a law which violates an innocent person's natural right to life is unjust and, as such, is not valid as a law. For this reason I urgently appeal once more to all **political leaders** not to pass laws which, by disregarding the dignity of the person, undermine the very fabric of society.”
- **Population growth:** It is morally unacceptable to encourage, let alone impose, the use of methods such as contraception, sterilization and abortion in order to regulate births.
- Family policy must be the basis and driving force of all social policies.





The family as the "sanctuary of life"

- The family has a special role to play throughout the life of its members, from birth to death. It is truly "the sanctuary of life: the place in which life-the gift of God-can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed, and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth".¹¹⁹ Consequently the role of the family in building a culture of life is decisive and irreplaceable.
- As the domestic church, the family is summoned to proclaim, celebrate and serve the Gospel of life. This is a responsibility which first concerns married couples
- It is above all in raising children that the family fulfils its mission to proclaim the Gospel of life.
- Daily prayer, both individual prayer and family prayer.
- Adoption
- Participation in social and political life.
- Special attention to elderly: Neglect or outright rejection are intolerable. The elderly can and must be sources of wisdom and witnesses of hope and love.
- The family urgently needs to be helped and supported by communities, the State, and the Church.

Transformation of culture

- We must build a new culture of life:
 - new, because it will be able to confront and solve today's unprecedented problems affecting human life;
 - new, because it will be adopted with deeper and more dynamic conviction by all Christians;
 - new, because it will be capable of bringing about a serious and courageous cultural dialogue among all parties.
- **Rooted in the Church's mission of evangelization.** The purpose of the Gospel, in fact, is "to transform humanity from within and to make it new".[123](#)
- The first and fundamental step towards this cultural transformation consists in **forming consciences with regard to the incomparable and inviolable worth of every human life.**
 - It is of the greatest importance to re-establish the essential connection between **life and freedom**
 - and between **freedom and truth.**
 - It is therefore essential that man should acknowledge his inherent condition as a creature to whom **God has granted being and life as a gift and a duty.**



Education & Lifestyle



- Chastity: **“Only a true love is able to protect life”**
- **Training married couples in responsible procreation** that is generously open to new lives, with an attitude of openness and service to life, even if, for serious reasons and in respect for the moral law, they choose to avoid a new birth for the time being or indefinitely.
- **Natural methods of regulating fertility**, including the moral values which they presuppose.
- Education in **suffering and death**: People must be helped to understand their profound mystery in all its harsh reality. Even pain and suffering have meaning and value when they are experienced in close connection with love received and given. Yearly celebration of the World Day of the Sick (Feb. 11)
- The cultural change which we are calling for demands from everyone the **courage to adopt a new life-style**, consisting in making practical choices-at the personal, family, social and international level-on the basis of a correct scale of values:
 - the primacy of being over having, [130](#) of the person over things. [131](#)
 - This renewed life-style involves a passing from indifference to concern for others, from rejection to acceptance of them. Other people are not rivals from whom we must defend ourselves, but brothers and sisters to be supported. They are to be loved for their own sakes, and they enrich us by their very presence.
- In this mobilization for a new culture of life no one must feel excluded: **everyone has an important role to play**: including **teachers and educators**; **Catholic intellectuals**; and those involved in the **mass media**

The role of women

- In promoting a "new feminism."
- **Women first learn and then teach others that human relations are authentic if they are open to accepting the other person:** a person who is recognized and loved because of the dignity which comes from being a person and not from other considerations, such as usefulness, strength, intelligence, beauty or health. This is the fundamental contribution which the Church and humanity expect from women. And it is the indispensable prerequisite for an authentic cultural change.
- **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**.
 - **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**. **To the same Father and his mercy you can with sure hope entrust your child.**
 - **With the friendly and expert help and advice of other people**, and as a result of your own painful experience, you can be among the most eloquent defenders of everyone's right to life.
 - Through your commitment to life, whether by accepting the birth of other children or by welcoming and caring for those most in need of someone to be close to them, **you will become promoters of a new way of looking at human life.**





The Gospel of life is for the whole human society

- When the Church declares that unconditional respect for the right to life of every innocent person-from conception to natural death-is one of the pillars on which every civil society stands, she "wants simply to promote a human State. A State which recognizes the defense of the fundamental rights of the human person, especially of the weakest, as its primary duty".[136](#)
- To be actively pro-life is to contribute to the renewal of society through the promotion of the common good. It is impossible to further the common good without acknowledging and defending the right to life, upon which all the other inalienable rights of individuals are founded and from which they develop.
- **Only respect for life can be the foundation and guarantee of the most precious and essential goods of society, such as democracy and peace.**

Conclusion



Mary, the Mother of Life

- Pope St. John Paul II closes with a trusting appeal to Mary, the "mother of life."
- Contemplating the scene in the Book of Revelation of the struggle between the woman who is about to give birth and the dragon which sets a snare for the life of the child, the pope invites us to recognize that throughout history "life is always at the center of a great struggle" (No. 104).
- But in the mutual relationship between the motherhood of Mary and her own motherhood toward all men and women, the church finds a source of great hope.
- Mary is the "living word of consolation" on history's difficult journey: To her, with filial confidence, the pope entrusts the cause of life.



Questions?

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Next Monthly *Walking with Moms* Webinar

Date:

Thursday, November 19, 2020

Topic:

Phase Three of
Walking with Moms: A Year of Service



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