

Loreto House

1100 N. Bonnie Brae St.
Denton, Tx 76201
940-380-8191

Volunteer policy

Revised September 29, 2021

Loreto House is a beacon of hope for women dealing with an unexpected pregnancy and we now serve over 35 women every day in our Denton facility. We provide alternatives to abortion that will improve the pregnancy and parenting situation of the women, and men who come to us. It takes many hands to provide the excellent level of care we provide, and we welcome volunteers to assist in various support functions. Loreto House is a Catholic organization and an approved Apostolate of the Diocese of Fort Worth. Our guests are served in alignment with our Catholic values and always in accord with the direction of our local Bishop.

Our services are provided free of charge and offered to pregnant women and parents of a child up to 36 months of age. We do not attempt to convert any guest to a particular religion, nor do we discriminate in who may receive the benefits of our services.

Client Services Nondiscrimination Policy

No person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any services available at Loreto House based on:

- race, • color, • sex, • religion, • creed, • political beliefs, • age, • national origin, • linguistic and language difference, • sexual orientation, • socio-economic status, • height, • weight, • marital or familial status, or • disability.

Our Catholic identity

As a Catholic organization representing our faith in the community, all employees are required to be in alignment with the Loreto House Statement of Faith and a practicing Catholic. Although we share many similar beliefs with our non-Catholic brothers and sisters in Christ, it is important that our identity remain authentically Catholic in our mission statement, governance, and operations.

Volunteers

There are numerous volunteer and service activities where we welcome our non-Catholic brothers and sisters to assist in the common goals and works of our mission. We are grateful for the gifts of time, talent, and treasure from all members of our community. We welcome people of any faith background to serve as a volunteer in various support functions that are vital for the operation of the center. We are a Christian organization and believe that people who accept the basic doctrine of Christianity would be most comfortable in our environment. The Apostles Creed is a good example of a common statement that our Christian Non-Catholics and Loreto House would agree upon. We respect the religious beliefs of our volunteers and do not proselytize our guests or volunteers.

The Apostles' Creed

*I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.*

Amen.

Volunteer activities

There are many ways for volunteers to help the mission and here are a few, but not limited to this list.

- Preparing guest bags for material goods distribution
- Count, wrap, and label diapers in bags for guests
- Knitting, crocheting, sewing, quilting items: booties, caps, baby blankets/quilts, burp cloths, crib sheets, baby/toddler sweaters and prayer shawls
- Helping the “Crafting Group” to create hand made gifts for our moms.
- General maintenance of the landscaping
- Distributing brochures and flyers in the community
- Facilitating an Angel tree program at your church
- Conducting a “diaper drive.”
- Preparing mailouts
- Organizing and maintaining the food pantry
- Help with maintaining the St. Gianna Gift Shoppe
- Gathering maternity clothing, washing it, and hanging it
- Organizing and maintaining the storage room
- Folding socks and tying ribbon around them
- Providing technical support in computers and office equipment
- General maintenance of the facility
- Helping with fund raising activities
- Organizing youth groups to conduct diaper drives and other projects
- General office work such as printing, collating, preparing initial visit pink folders
- Sticker/Paper Ornamental decorating of envelopes for holding sonogram pictures
- Beading and making pearl bracelets and attaching them to cards with ribbon
- Making copies of folic acid information and attaching them to prenatal vitamin bottles with ribbon
- Assisting the Resource director in updating our resource list

Loreto House

Statement of Faith

December 10, 2020

Loreto House is a faith based 501-C-3 nonprofit and a Catholic Apostolate of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas. We serve the community in alignment with our bishop and the teachings of the Catholic Church. All employees and volunteers are called to emulate our Blessed Mother in the manner that we listen to and respond to the needs of our guests. Our Catholic identity is integral to our mission and all employees are a witness to the Catholic faith. To ensure this goal, all employees will be a practicing Catholic in agreement with our **Statement of Faith** and our **Policies and Procedures manual**. There are numerous volunteer and service activities where we welcome our non-Catholic brothers and sisters to assist in the common goals and works of our mission. We are grateful for the gifts of time, talent, and treasure from all members of our community.

As Catholics, we are united with other Catholics around the world especially by the way we worship and what we believe. What follows is a summary of some of the fundamental aspects of our faith; of what we believe. In 1992, under the direction of Pope St. John Paul II, the Holy See promulgated the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which is given as a summary of the vast content of Catholic faith. It is especially in the Catechism that the most precise and accurate statements of our belief can be found. As Pope St. John Paul II himself said,

“The Catechism of the Catholic Church, which I approved June 25th last and the publication of which I today order by virtue of my Apostolic Authority, is a statement of the Church’s faith and of catholic doctrine, attested to or illumined by Sacred Scripture, the Apostolic Tradition, and the Church’s Magisterium. I declare it to be a sure norm for teaching the faith and thus a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion.” (Fidei Depositum).

References below designated with a “CCC,” therefore, refer to paragraph numbers in the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#).

God

We believe that God is the almighty Principle and Creator of all that exists. God not only has created all things, but also, at each instant, holds all things in existence. Everything in the created world depends utterly upon the free choice of God for its existence. We believe that the existence of God is something which is knowable from natural reason and science: God’s existence can be proven. (CCC 31-35)

We believe that this same God who freely created all things has revealed in history His particular love for human beings. God has revealed Himself in a variety of ways throughout human history. He has revealed certain truths about Himself, about His love for the created world, particularly human beings, and about His providential plan. (CCC 50-53)

The Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

One of the things which we believe that God has revealed about Himself is that He exists as a Trinity of three divine Persons. This is NOT to say that there are three distinct gods or that there are merely three modes according to which the same god reveals himself. Rather, we believe that the same God exists as Father, Son and Holy Spirit: three Persons all of whom are identical to the same, numerically singular divine nature. All three Persons are fully and equally God. (CCC 253-256)

This is one of the central Mysteries of our faith. God’s nature so profoundly transcends our own, that we are not fully able to comprehend Him. Therefore, we do not comprehensively grasp what exactly it means for God to be three Persons in one nature. However, we believe that it is so because God has revealed it.

Jesus Christ

In the “fullness of time” we believe that the Son: the second Person of the Blessed Trinity assumed the nature of a human being and walked the earth as the Person Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus Christ is thus fully human and fully divine. Whereas the Trinity may be described as three Persons in one nature, Jesus Christ may be described as one Person with two natures: human and divine. (CCC 464-469)

Jesus Christ is a real, historical Person who walked the earth nearly 2000 years ago and died upon the Cross. As Catholics, we believe that He was no mere human being, however. Rather, we believe that Jesus Christ is truly the God of the universe and that He willed to assume a human nature in order to redeem and save us.

The Incarnation, or the act of God’s taking on a human nature and “becoming man” in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is the second central Mystery of our faith. Though we may not fully comprehend how it is that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human, we believe that Jesus is telling the truth when He tells us that it is so. (CCC 470)

Resurrection

We believe that after three days in the tomb, Jesus Christ rose from the dead and walked the earth again for a period of 40 days. While God cannot die, Jesus did truly die in His human nature – His Body did truly separate from His Soul – but that He rose again from the dead after three days. (CCC 627) Over 500 people saw and spoke with Jesus after His Resurrection and were taught by Him, and their testimony has been handed down through the ages in the forms of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. (CCC 641-644)

The Resurrection is the definitive proof of Jesus’ divinity: it is because He rose from the dead that we believe Him when He claims to be God. Because He is God, we believe everything else He has said to be trustworthy as well, including His claim that we too shall rise from the dead at the end of time. Jesus’ Resurrection sets the stage for our own resurrection. (CCC 988-1004)

The Church

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Mt 16:18)

We believe that before Jesus ascended into heaven, He formed the community of those who believe in Him into a church, defined especially by common belief (creed) and liturgical practice (worship). (CCC 763-766) Jesus Christ established His Church as the privileged vehicle through which He continues to communicate to the human race His gifts of grace and truth. (CCC 824) He promised that His Church would be safeguarded until the end of time by the power of the Holy Spirit, so we can trust that the Church’s Sacraments truly do communicate to us God’s gift of grace and that the teaching of the Church faithfully and accurately represents the truth about God and His will for human beings. (CCC 737-741)

We believe that the fullness of what Christ intended for His Church is to be found in the Catholic Church. While it is certainly true that individual members of the Church are very much capable of error, the authoritative, dogmatic teaching of the Catholic Church is understood to be the definitive and correct understanding of the faith handed on by Christ and the Apostles. (CCC 888-892)

The Bible

The Bible (also called Sacred Scripture) is a collection of ancient texts compiled by the early Church which we believe to be divinely inspired. That is to say that the books of the Bible (46 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament) were written by human authors under the inspiration of God Himself. So, while the books of the Bible are authored by particular people living in particular times and contexts, it is also in a mysterious way authored by God. (CCC 105-108) This being the case, while the individual books of the Bible were written over the course of many centuries, because they are authored by God who is not bound by time or place, they do very much cohere as one book which we call the Bible. (CCC 128-130)

The Bible contains a whole variety of literary genres. While much of it is, in fact, historical (particularly the New Testament), the books of the Bible also contain ancient poetry, prophetic literature, apocalyptic literature and metaphorical language. (CCC 115-119) In order to correctly understand the intention of the Bible’s human and divine authors, it is meant to be read within the living Tradition of the whole Church. (CCC 80-84) In other words, while sacred Scripture is an indispensable font of divine and salvific truth, without sacred Tradition the texts of the Bible

alone are a dead letter. “Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted in light of the same Spirit by whom it was written.” (Dei Verbum 12.3)

The Creed

The Creed is the most concise form of our belief as Catholics. From the time of the Apostles, members of the Church have handed on the faith in these concise formulae. The two principal forms of the Creed are The Apostles’ Creed, which is so called because it is a summary of the faith of the first Apostles, and the Nicene Creed, which is a bit longer and is derived from the first two ecumenical Councils of the Church (Council of Nicaea in 325 and Council of Constantinople I in 381). (CCC 185-197)

The Pope

Jesus built His Church upon the “rock of St. Peter.” He charged Peter with headship over His Church and to be a visible sign of the Church’s unity after His Ascension into heaven. We see from the earliest years of the Church’s existence that Peter and his successors are recognized as having a particular kind of authority when it comes to faithfully transmitting the teaching of Jesus Himself. In the book of Acts of the Apostles, for example, we find Peter leading the first council of the Church in Jerusalem and issuing the first of the Church’s dogmatic decisions. Peter is the “Vicar of Christ.” (CCC 880-883)

We believe that this authority which is given to St. Peter is also transmitted to his successors. Through the centuries of history, from the time of St. Peter himself to our own day, there has been an unbroken line of successors of St. Peter whom we refer to as the Pope. The Pope is the successor to St. Peter, the “Holy Father” (the word “pope” comes from the Latin word “papa,” which means “father”), the Bishop of Rome and the Vicar of Christ. (CCC 861-862)

All of this is certainly not to say that every pope in history has been an exemplary Christian. The Pope is still very much a human being and perfectly capable of failing to live up to his office or his Christian dignity – history is full of examples of this. The teaching of the Holy Father enjoys the character of “infallibility,” or incapable of being wrong or mistaken, only when he speaks “ex cathedra,” or with the full authority of his office. Not every statement of a pope is infallible. The Pope, as an individual, is capable of error. Only formal declarations made with the full weight and authority of his office in communion with the other bishops are considered to be infallible. (CCC 891-892)

Bishops

In addition to St. Peter, Jesus entrusted a certain role and authority to His other eleven Apostles. If St. Peter was the first pope, the other eleven Apostles were the first bishops. (CCC 883-887) Together with the Pope, the bishops constitute what is called the Magisterium, or teaching office of the Church. We believe that Jesus promised to protect from error the official teaching of His Church: “He who hears you, hears me. He who rejects you, rejects me and he who rejects me rejects the One who sent me.” (Lk 10:16) Like the Apostles, the bishops are entrusted with governance of the Church. Each bishop is assigned to a particular region of the Church called a diocese or archdiocese. The bishop of an archdiocese is called an archbishop. (CCC 832-834)

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Priests

Priests serve as co-workers with the bishops in their role of teaching, sanctifying and governing the Church. By the Sacrament of Holy Orders, they also receive a permanent mark on their soul which conforms them to Christ and allows Him to act through them in a particular way. Priests act “in persona Christi,” or “in the Person of Christ,” which means that they serve as the instruments through which Jesus Christ Himself works in a particular way. (CCC 1548) It is because of this that, in offering the Sacrament of Confession for example, a priest says “I absolve you of your sins,” and when celebrating the Sacrament of the Eucharist, he says, “This is my body.” By virtue of their ordination, priests

become mediators between God and human beings: offering prayers to God on behalf of His people and dispensing to people the gift of saving grace which comes from God. (CCC 1562-1568)

Deacons

Deacons also receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders and so also receive a mark on their soul which conforms them to Christ in a particular way. By their ordination, they are consecrated to assist the priests and bishops especially in helping with the administration of certain Sacraments and in teaching the faith through preaching. (CCC 1569-1571)

The Sacraments

A Catholic Sacrament is traditionally defined as “an efficacious sign of grace instituted by Christ.” This means that while the Sacraments are ritual actions which signify grace, they also actually cause that which they signify. We believe that the Sacraments actually cause the effect which they signify. They are not merely empty rituals. Rather, the recipient of a Sacrament is actually changed: they receive God’s gift of grace by receiving the Sacrament. The Sacraments are the privileged vehicles through which God communicates to us the grace which we need in order to grow in holiness and ultimately enter eternal life. (CCC 1127-1130)

We believe that Jesus Christ instituted seven Sacraments to be celebrated by His ministers through the centuries so that those of us who live in the generations after His Ascension into heaven might have access to the grace which we need to be saved. The seven Sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Confession (also called Penance or Reconciliation), Anointing of the Sick, Holy Matrimony and Holy Orders. (CCC 1113-1121)

Grace

We believe that God saves us by making us like Himself. To be holy is simply to be God-like. To make us like Himself, God bestows upon us, especially through the Sacraments, His gift of grace. God gives us to share in His own divine nature: He deifies or divinizes us. This is not to say that we are somehow absorbed into God, but it is to say that we do truly share in His own nature: we are truly transformed in the depths of our very being to become God’s sons and daughters and are thus prepared to spend eternal life with Him. This sharing in God’s own nature is not something which we could ever bestow upon ourselves or hope to earn. Rather, it is a gift of God which He offers to us freely out of His love. This participating in the very life of God; the transformative elevation of our being beyond the natural to the supernatural life of God is what is meant by the word grace. (CCC 1996-2005)

It is only by grace that our actions can ever be pleasing to God. When we sin, we turn our back on God and thus cut ourselves off from the source of grace. (CCC 2008-2011) We can effectively destroy the supernatural life of grace within our souls when we commit sin. (CCC 1861) Gratefully, in His mercy, our Lord established the Sacrament of Reconciliation wherein those who have lost God’s gift of grace through sin may have it restored to them. (CCC 1856)

Heaven, Hell and Purgatory

We believe that God created human beings with a spiritual soul which will live forever. When a person dies, their soul separates from their body, and they pass from earthly life into eternal life. Whereas while we are on earth we exist in time and we live from moment to moment, eternal life takes place outside of time. (CCC 362-368) This is why the Lord is so adamant in warning us throughout the Gospels to be prepared and to be sure that our souls are ready and free of sin: when we pass from this life into the next, we are fixed there for eternity. We will either eternally enjoy the reward and bliss of life with God, or eternally suffer the pain of life without Him. (CCC 1007, 1020)

Eternal life with God is what we mean by the word heaven. A person who dies in God’s grace – that is, a person who dies without the stain of mortal sin upon their soul – will enter heaven when their time on earth comes to an end. Those in heaven enjoy a happiness and a peace beyond anything that this earthly life could possibly offer. We will come into the direct presence of the God and King of the universe, and He will satisfy every longing of our hearts (CCC 1023-1029): “Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Mt 25:34).

Eternal life without God is what we mean by the word hell. A person who dies in a state of rejection of God – that is, a person who has turned their back on God, destroyed the life of grace in their soul through mortal sin, and has not repented of their sin – will enter hell when their time on earth comes to an end. Those in hell will suffer in an eternal state of separation from the God who is Goodness itself. Our Lord uses very graphic imagery throughout the Gospels to illustrate the great suffering and torment that will befall the souls of the damned. While God is good and always ready to forgive and desires our salvation, He will not force His love upon us. He respects the free will with which we

are created and will not force Himself upon us if we choose to reject Him by the way that we live, speak or act. The eternal pains of hell are the just result of the free decisions of those who choose to reject God's love and mercy (CCC 1033-1037). "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels..." (Mt 25:41)

The state of purgatory is a temporal state which many souls will enter when their time on earth comes to an end to be purified of any attachments to sin, they may have. Unlike heaven and hell, purgatory is not an eternal state: no one remains in purgatory forever. Rather, purgatory is a place of cleansing and purification. It is for those who have not completely rejected God by mortal sin, but also did not die in a state of perfect love of God. Those who die with attachments to earthly things or sinful behaviors will go to purgatory to be prepared for heaven: all souls who go to purgatory after they die will go to heaven when their time of purification is complete (CCC 1030-1032).

We can assist those in purgatory by the help of our prayers. Therefore, since the earliest decades of the Church, Christians have prayed for the dead. Our prayers really do assist those in purgatory to endure their time of purification and thus be made ready for their heavenly reward. "Therefore, he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin." (2 Macc 12:45)

The Saints

A saint is anyone who has attained the life of heaven. Any person who has lived a virtuous life on earth and has thus gone to their heavenly reward is a saint. We are all, thus, called to be saints. (CCC 2013-2014)

Certain individuals are recognized and declared to be saints by the Church through a process called canonization. When a person is canonized, it simply means that the Church recognizes that person as having lived an exemplary life of holiness and who is now certainly in heaven. Not every saint is canonized. Certain saints are canonized, however, in order that they might be held up as an example to all Christians and in order that we might ask for their intercession. (CCC 828)

We do not pray to saints in the way that we pray to God. We do not worship the saints. Rather, we honor them for their heroic virtue and, most importantly, we ask them to pray to God for us. The saints are those who have attained the reward we all hope to attain one day. They stand in the direct presence of God and thus are able to offer powerful prayers before the face of God when we ask them. (CCC 956) The Book of Revelation vividly depicts the saints praying on our behalf in the heavenly liturgy: "And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints..." (Rev 5:8).

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The Blessed Virgin Mary

We honor the Blessed Virgin Mary as the greatest of the saints. The Lord chose Mary to be the one through whom He would become incarnate. As the mother of Jesus – whom we believe to be truly man and truly God – we believe that Mary can truly be said to be the mother of God. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became incarnate in her womb and was born to the world as her Son in order to save us from our sins. (CCC 495)

By a particular gift of grace, we believe that Mary was preserved from the stain of original sin and never committed any personal sin through the course of her earthly life. Mary was given this grace not as a reward for any of her merits,

but in order that she might be a fitting vessel to literally bear the God of the universe. It was highly appropriate that Mary was preserved from all sin on account of the dignity of her role as the mother of God. (CCC 487-489)

As the greatest of all the saints – and thus, the greatest of all human beings – we believe that the prayers which Mary offers to God on our behalf are especially powerful. She is a most powerful intercessor, and all Christians are invited by Jesus on the Cross to look at her and “Behold your mother.” (Jn 19:27)

Abortion

2270 Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.⁷²

Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.⁷³

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth.⁷⁴

2271 Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law:

You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish.⁷⁵

God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.⁷⁶

2272 Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life. "A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication latae sententiae,"⁷⁷ "by the very commission of the offense,"⁷⁸ and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law.⁷⁹ The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.

2273 The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation:

"The inalienable rights of the person must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority. These human rights depend neither on single individuals nor on parents; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin. Among such fundamental rights one should mention in this regard every human being's right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death."⁸⁰

"The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law. When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined. . . . Because of the respect and protection which must be ensured for the unborn child from the moment of conception, the law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child's rights."⁸¹

2274 Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.

Prenatal diagnosis is morally licit, "if it respects the life and integrity of the embryo and the human fetus and is directed toward its safeguarding or healing as an individual. . . . It is gravely opposed to the moral law when this is done with the thought of possibly inducing an abortion, depending upon the results: a diagnosis must not be the equivalent of a death sentence."⁸²

2275 "One must hold as licit procedures carried out on the human embryo which respect the life and integrity of the embryo and do not involve disproportionate risks for it, but are directed toward its healing the improvement of its condition of health, or its individual survival."⁸³

"It is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation as disposable biological material."⁸⁴

"Certain attempts to influence chromosomal or genetic inheritance are not therapeutic but are aimed at producing human beings selected according to sex or other predetermined qualities. Such manipulations are contrary to the personal dignity of the human being and his integrity and identity"⁸⁵ which are unique and unrepeatable.

Euthanasia

2276 Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible.

2277 Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable.

Thus, an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator. The error of judgment into which one can fall in good faith does not change the nature of this murderous act, which must always be forbidden and excluded.

2278 Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected.

2279 Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity. As such it should be encouraged.

Contraception

When there is a question of harmonizing conjugal love with the responsible transmission of life, the moral aspect of any procedure does not depend solely on sincere intentions or on an evaluation of motives. It must be determined by objective standards. These, based on the nature of the human person and his acts, preserve the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love. Such a goal cannot be achieved unless the virtue of conjugal chastity is sincerely practiced. Relying on these principles, sons of the Church may not undertake methods of regulating procreation which are found blameworthy by the teaching authority of the Church in its unfolding of the divine law" (Gaudium et Spes, 51).

Does the Church teach that the unnatural or artificial means of birth control are immoral and blameworthy? Yes. In *Humanae Vitae*, the first-named form of illicit or unnatural method of birth control is abortion (n. 14).[3]

Then, "equally to be excluded, as the teaching authority of the Church has frequently declared, is direct sterilization, whether perpetual or temporary whether of the man or woman" (*Humanae Vitae*, 14). This condemns tubal ligations, vasectomies, and the Pill.

"Similarly excluded is every action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible" (*Humanae Vitae*, 14). Such unnatural forms include the Pill, the intrauterine device, foams, diaphragms, condoms, withdrawal, mutual or solitary masturbation and sodomistic practices.

Are some forms of unnatural birth control worse than others? Yes. Those forms that act after conception has occurred to prevent the continuation of the pregnancy participate in the additional evil of abortion. "From the moment of its conception life must be guarded with greatest care, while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes" (Gaudium et Spes, 51).

Surgical abortion is the most obvious but not the only form. The intrauterine device (IUD) acts primarily as an early abortion agent by preventing implantation of the week-old human life.

The birth control Pill makes the inner lining of the uterus very hostile to implantation. It is not known how often the Pill acts in this way, but it cannot be denied that the Pill may be acting as an early abortion agent in any given cycle in any given woman.[4]

Chastity

2338 The chaste person maintains the integrity of the powers of life and love placed in him. This integrity ensures the unity of the person; it is opposed to any behavior that would impair it. It tolerates neither a double life nor duplicity in speech.

2344 Chastity represents an eminently personal task; it also involves a cultural effort, for there is “an interdependence between personal betterment and the improvement of society.” Chastity presupposes respect for the rights of the person, in particular the right to receive information and an education that respect the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life.

2345 Chastity is a moral virtue. It is also a gift from God, a grace, a fruit of spiritual effort. The Holy Spirit enables one whom the water of Baptism has regenerated to imitate the purity of Christ.

Same-sex Attraction

2357 Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained.

2358 The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God’s will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord’s Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.

Homosexuals and Chastity

2359 Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.

Conjugal Love

2360 Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman. In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. Marriage bonds between baptized persons are sanctified by the sacrament.

Marriage and Sexuality

2361 “Sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is not something simply biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and woman commit themselves totally to one another until death” (Familiaris Consortio 11).

Tobias got out of bed and said to Sarah, “Sister, get up, and let us pray and implore our Lord that he grant us mercy and safety.” So she got up, and they began to pray and implore that they might be kept safe. Tobias began by saying, “Blessed are you, O God of our fathers.... You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the race of mankind has sprung. You said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself.’ I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together.” and they both said, “Amen, Amen.” Then they went to sleep for the night (Tobit 8:4-9).

Marital Union

2362 “The acts in marriage by which the intimate and chaste union of the spouses takes place are noble and honorable; the truly human performance of these acts fosters the self-giving they signify and enriches the spouses in joy and gratitude” (Gaudium et Spes 49 § 2). Sexuality is a source of joy and pleasure:

The Creator himself . . . established that in the [generative] function, spouses should experience pleasure and enjoyment of body and spirit. Therefore, the spouses do nothing evil in seeking this pleasure and enjoyment. They accept what the Creator has intended for them. At the same time, spouses should know how to keep themselves within the limits of just moderation (Pius XII, Discourse, October 29, 1951).

2363 The spouses’ union achieves the twofold end of marriage: the good of the spouses themselves and the transmission of life. These two meanings or values of marriage cannot be separated without altering the couple’s spiritual life and compromising the goods of marriage and the future of the family. The conjugal love of man and woman thus stands under the twofold obligation of fidelity and fecundity.