

# The Dignity of Life / Ethics of Life

C14, 15

# Life and Dignity of the Human Person

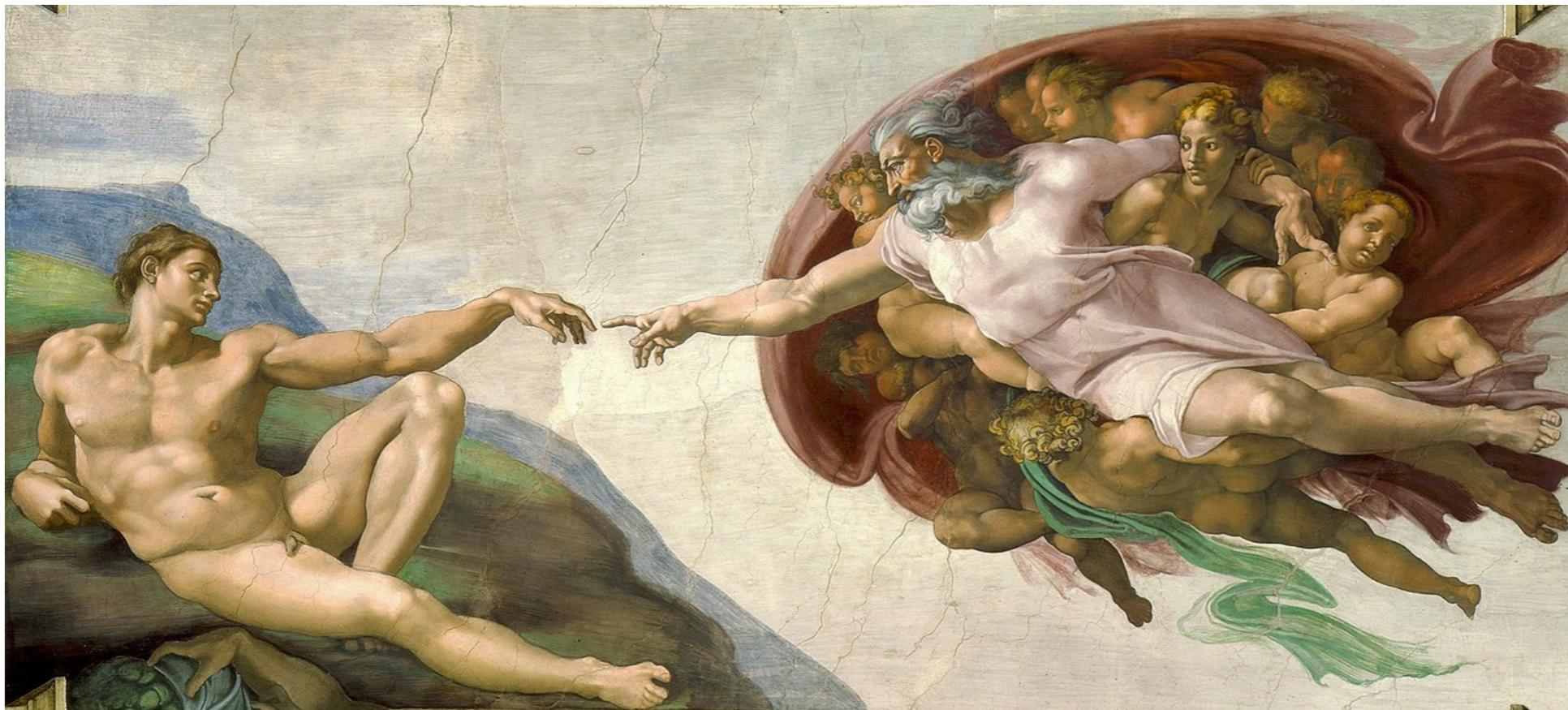


# Jeremiah 1:4-5



**4** The word of the Lord came to me:

**5** Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,  
before you were born I dedicated you,  
a prophet to the nations I appointed you.



## Creation of Adam

Michelangelo - c.1511

**CCC §2258** "*Human life is sacred* because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever 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 under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being."

# USCCB

## Life and Dignity of the Human Person



The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching.

In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia.

The value of human life is being threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty.

The intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong.

Catholic teaching also calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding increasingly effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means.

We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

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- that every person is precious,
- that people are more important than things,
- and that the **measure** of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.





## **Why Are Catholics So “Pro-Life”? | Fr. Casey**

[youtube.com/watch?v=1hLNA0rikrA](https://youtube.com/watch?v=1hLNA0rikrA)

# Scriptures on Value of Life

- **Genesis 1:26-31** — God created man and woman in his image.
- **Deuteronomy 10:17-19** — God loves the orphan, the widow, and the stranger.
- **Psalms 139:13-16** — God formed each of us and knows us intimately.
- **Proverbs 22:2** — The Lord is the maker of both rich and poor.
- **Luke 10:25-37** — The good Samaritan recognized the dignity in the other and cared for his life.
- **John 4:1-42** — Jesus broke with societal and religious customs to honor the dignity of the Samaritan woman.
- **Romans 12: 9-18** — Love one another, contribute to the needs of others, live peaceably with all.
- **1 Corinthians 3:16** — You are holy, for you are God's temple and God dwells in you.
- **Galatians 3:27-28** — All Christians are one in Christ Jesus.
- **James 2:1-8** — Honor the poor.
- **1 John 3: 1-2** — See what love the Father has for us, that we should be called Children of God.
- **1 John 4:7-12** — Let us love one another because love is from God.

**Pope Francis, Brothers and Sisters to Us [*Fratelli Tutti*], §118:**

“The world exists for everyone, because all of us were born with the same dignity.

Differences of color, religion, talent, place of birth or residence, and so many others, cannot be used to justify the privileges of some over the rights of all.

As a community, we have an obligation to ensure that every person lives with dignity and has sufficient opportunities for his or her integral development.”

**(Pope Francis, Brothers and Sisters to Us [Fratelli Tutti], § 213)**

“The dignity of others is to be respected in all circumstances, not because that dignity is something we have invented or imagined, but because human beings possess **an intrinsic worth** superior to that of material objects and contingent situations.

This requires that they be treated differently.

That every human being **possesses an inalienable dignity** is a truth that corresponds to human nature apart from all cultural change.

For this reason, human beings have the same inviolable dignity in every age of history and no one can consider himself or herself authorized by particular situations to deny this conviction or to act against it.”

(Pope Francis, Rejoice and Be Glad [Gaudete et Exsultate], no. 101)

“Our defense of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be **clear, firm and passionate**, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development.

**Equally sacred**, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection. [§84]

**We cannot uphold an ideal of holiness that would ignore injustice in a world where some revel, spend with abandon and live only for the latest consumer goods, even as others look on from afar, living their entire lives in abject poverty.”**



**PART THREE  
LIFE IN CHRIST  
SECTION TWO  
THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

**CHAPTER TWO  
"YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF"**

**ARTICLE 5  
THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT**

You shall not kill. (Exodus 20:13)

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. (Matthew 5:21-22)

**2258,** "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever 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 under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being."<sup>56</sup>



# CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

## NEW REVISION OF NUMBER 2267 OF THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON THE DEATH PENALTY – RESCRIPTUM “EX AUDIENTIA SS.MI”

The Supreme Pontiff Francis, in the audience granted on **11 May 2018** to the undersigned Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has approved the following new draft of no. 2267 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, arranging for it to be translated into various languages and inserted in all the editions of the aforementioned Catechism.

### **The death penalty**

**CCC §2267.** Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good.

**Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes.** In addition, a new understanding has emerged of the significance of penal sanctions imposed by the state. Lastly, more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption.

**Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that “the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person” and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide.**

# I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

## The witness of sacred history

- **2259** Cain and Abel - Scripture: presence of anger and envy in man,
  - consequences of original sin — Man has become the enemy of his fellow man.

"What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand." Genesis 4:10
- **2260** The covenant between God and mankind is interwoven with reminders of God's gift of human life and man's murderous violence:

"For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning. . . . Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image." Gen 9:5-6
- **The Old Testament always considered blood a sacred sign of life. This teaching remains necessary for all time.**
- **2261** Prohibition contained in the fifth commandment: "Do not kill."
- **2262** In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus: "You shall not kill,"
  - and adds to it the proscription of anger, hatred, and vengeance.
  - Going further, Christ asks his disciples to turn the other cheek, to love their enemies. He did not defend himself and told Peter to leave his sword in its sheath.

# I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

## Legitimate defense

- **2263** The legitimate defense of persons and societies is **NOT** an exception to the prohibition against the murder of the **innocent** that constitutes intentional killing. "The **act of self-defense** can have a **double effect**:
  - the preservation of one's own life;
  - and the killing of the aggressor. . . .
  - The one is intended, the other is not."
- **2264** Love toward oneself remains a fundamental principle of morality.
  - legitimate to insist on respect for one's own right to life = **not** guilty of murder if self defense
  - Unlawful to use unnecessary force
- **2265** Legitimate defense = right **AND a grave duty** if responsible for the lives of others.
  - The defense of the **common good** requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm.

# I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

## Legitimate defense

- **2266** efforts of the state to curb the spread of behavior harmful to people's rights — correspond to the requirement of safeguarding the common good.
  - Legitimate public authority has the **right and duty** to inflict punishment **proportionate** to the gravity of the offense.
  - Punishment → defending public order and protecting people's safety,
  - has a medicinal purpose → must contribute to the correction of the guilty party.

# I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

## The death penalty

➤ **2267** Sentence to **death penalty** after a fair trial WAS thought an appropriate response to certain grave crimes — and an acceptable means to safeguard the common good.

Today, however, there is an **increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes.**

Penal sanctions are effective: punishment, rehabilitation, and a deterrent.

More effective systems of detention have been developed,

1. ensure protection of citizens
2. at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption.

Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person, and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide.

## WRONGLY CONVICTED

“In 1984, I was wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death for the rape and murder of nine-year-old Dawn Hamilton in Baltimore, Maryland. I spent eight years, eleven months, and nineteen days behind bars before DNA testing proved my innocence.

“In that time, my life had been taken from me and destroyed. The Catholic Church provided me with essential support in my time of need, and I converted to Catholicism in 1989, while I was serving time behind bars.

“Every bit of my story exemplifies the problems in the death penalty system. The same systemic flaws that led to my wrongful conviction, such as mistaken identification, inadequate representation, prosecutorial misconduct, and basic human error, plague the cases of innocent people in prison and on death row.”

— **Kirk Bloodworth**, speaking at the USCCB Press Conference launching the Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty (March 21, 2005)



# I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

## Intentional homicide

➤ **2268**, The fifth commandment forbids *direct and intentional killing* as gravely sinful.

Infanticide, fratricide, parricide, and the murder of a spouse are especially grave crimes by reason of the natural bonds which they break. Concern for eugenics or public health cannot justify any murder, even if commanded by public authority.

➤ **2269**, The fifth commandment forbids doing anything with the intention of *indirectly* bringing about a person's death — as well as putting someone in grave danger.

➤ The acceptance of **murderous famines** is a scandalous injustice and a grave offense — indirectly commit homicide, which is imputable to them.

➤ **Unintentional killing** is not morally imputable.

➤ Must consider the circumstances.

➤ There are still consequences.

# I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

## 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**.

*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you. - Jeremiah 1:5*

- **2271**, Since the first century the Church: moral evil of every procured abortion. Unchanged.

You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish. - **Didache (50AD - 110AD)**

- **2272**, Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense.
  - The Church attaches the **canonical penalty of excommunication** to this crime against human life.

# I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

## Abortion

- **2273** The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a *constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation...*
  - As a consequence 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."
- **2274** 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 safe guarding or healing as an individual. . . .
  - It is gravely opposed if the results → abortion, depending upon the results: **a diagnosis must not be the equivalent of a death sentence.**

# I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

## Abortion

- **2275, 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.”
  - "It is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation as **disposable** biological material.”
  - Also immoral:
    - attempts to *influence chromosomal or genetic inheritance* — not therapeutic
    - but — aimed at producing human beings selected according to sex or other predetermined qualities.

# I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

## 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.**
  - constitutes a **murder gravely contrary** to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator.
- **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.
- **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 is **merciful** and encouraged as necessary
    - even at the risk of shortening their days

# I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

## End-of-Life Concerns

[https://www.usccb.org/resources/ethical-religious-directives-catholic-health-service-sixth-edition-2016-06\\_0.pdf](https://www.usccb.org/resources/ethical-religious-directives-catholic-health-service-sixth-edition-2016-06_0.pdf)

# Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services

*Sixth Edition*

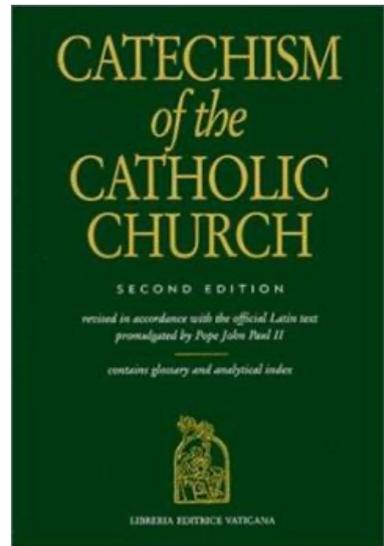
This sixth edition of the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* was developed by the Committee on Doctrine of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and approved by the USCCB at its June 2018 Plenary Assembly. This edition of the *Directives* replaces all previous editions, is recommended for implementation by the diocesan bishop, and is authorized for publication by the undersigned.



Msgr. J. Brian Bransfield, STD  
General Secretary, USCCB

# I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

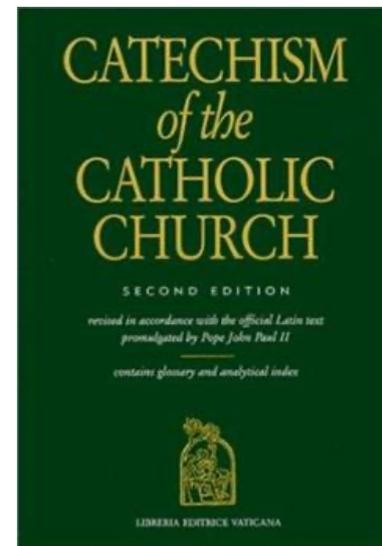
## Suicide (§2280 - §2283)



# I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

## Suicide (§2280 - §2283)

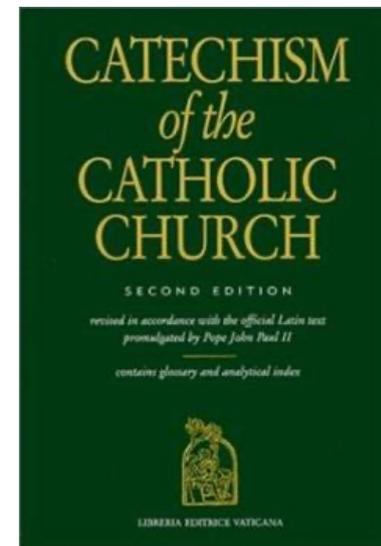
- Everyone is responsible for his life before God and obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for his honor and the salvation of our souls.
- We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us.
- It is not ours to dispose of.
- contradicts the natural inclination of the human being to preserve/ perpetuate his life.
  - gravely contrary to the just love of self.
  - offends/injures love of neighbor
  - Suicide is contrary to love for the living God.



# I. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

## Suicide (§2280 - §2283)

- **2282** If suicide is committed with the intention of setting an example, especially to the young, it also takes on the gravity of scandal. Voluntary co-operation in suicide is contrary to the moral law.
- **Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide.**
- **2283** We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives.



## II. RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS

### Respect for the souls of others: scandal

- **2284** Scandal is an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil.
  - He damages virtue and integrity → spiritual death.
  - Scandal is a **grave offense** if by deed or omission another is **deliberately led** into a grave offense.
- **2285** Scandal takes on a particular gravity by reason of the authority of those who cause it or the weakness of those who are scandalized.
  - It prompted our Lord to utter this curse: **"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."**
  - Scandal is grave when given by those who by nature or office are obliged to teach and educate others.
- **2286** Scandal can be provoked by **laws or institutions**, by fashion or opinion.
  - Therefore, they are guilty of scandal who establish laws or social structures leading to the decline of morals and the corruption of religious practice
  - This is also true of **business leaders** who make rules encouraging fraud, teachers who provoke their children to anger, or manipulators of public opinion who turn it away from moral values.
- **2287** Anyone who **uses the power at his disposal** in such a way that it leads others to do wrong becomes guilty of scandal and responsible for the evil that he has directly or indirectly encouraged. "Temptations to sin are sure to come; but woe to him by whom they come!"

## II. RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS

### Respect for health

- **2288** Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good.
- *Concern for the health* of its citizens requires that society help in the attainment of living-conditions that allow them to grow and reach maturity: food and clothing, housing, health care, basic education, employment, and social assistance.
- **2289** It rejects a neo-pagan notion that tends to promote the ***cult of the body***
- **2290** The **virtue of temperance** disposes us to *avoid every kind of excess*:
  - the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco, or medicine.
  - Those incur grave **guilt** who, by drunkenness or a love of speed, endanger their own and others' safety on the road, at sea, or in the air.
- **2291** The *use of drugs* inflicts very grave damage on human health and life.
  - They constitute direct co-operation in evil, since they encourage people to practices gravely contrary to the moral law.

## II. RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS

### Respect for the person and scientific research

- **2292** Scientific, medical, or psychological experiments on human individuals or groups can contribute to healing the sick and the advancement of public health.
- **2293** Science and technology are precious resources when placed at the service of man and promote his integral development for the benefit of all.
- **2294** Science and technology by their very nature require unconditional respect for fundamental moral criteria. They must be at the service of the human person, of his inalienable rights, of his true and integral good, in conformity with the plan and the will of God.
- **2295** Research or experimentation on the human being cannot legitimate acts that are in themselves contrary to the dignity of persons and to the moral law. The subjects' potential consent does not justify such acts.
  - Experimentation on human beings is not morally legitimate if it exposes the subject's life or physical and psychological integrity to disproportionate or avoidable risks.
  - Experimentation on human beings does not conform to the dignity of the person if it takes place without the informed consent of the subject or those who legitimately speak for him.

## II. RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS

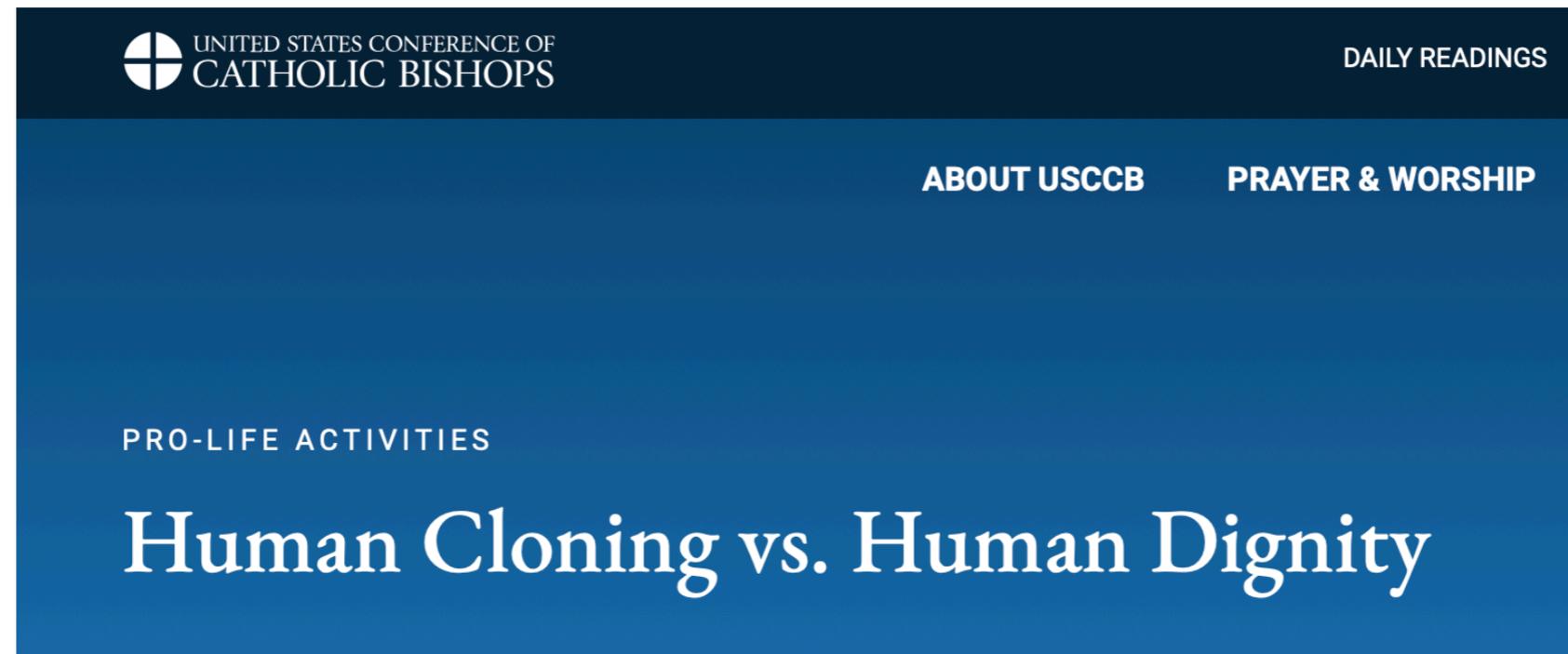
### Respect for the person and scientific research

- **2296** *Organ transplants* are in conformity with the moral law if the physical and psychological dangers and risks to the donor are proportionate to the good sought for the recipient.
- Organ donation after death is a noble and meritorious act and is to be encouraged as a expression of generous solidarity.
- It is not morally acceptable if the donor or his proxy has not given explicit consent.
- Moreover, it is not morally admissible to bring about the disabling mutilation or death of a human being, even in order to delay the death of other persons.

## II. RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS

Respect for the person and scientific research

Cloning and Embryonic Stem Cell Research



### **The Catholic Church's Teaching Regarding Stem Cell Research**

By Lucas Pollice, M.T.S.

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you."*

*--Jeremiah, 1:5*

## II. RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS

### Respect for bodily integrity

- **2297** *Kidnapping and hostage taking* bring on a reign of terror; by means of threats they subject their victims to intolerable pressures. They are morally wrong. *T*
- *errorism* threatens, wounds, and kills indiscriminately; it is gravely against justice and charity.
- *Torture* which uses physical or moral violence to extract confessions, punish the guilty, frighten opponents, or satisfy hatred is contrary to respect for the person and for human dignity.
- Except when performed for strictly therapeutic medical reasons, directly intended *amputations, mutilations, and sterilizations* performed on innocent persons are against the moral law.<sup>91</sup>
- **2298** cruel practices were commonly used by legitimate governments to maintain law and order,
  - neither necessary for public order, nor in conformity with the legitimate rights of the human person.
  - On the contrary, these practices led to ones even more degrading.
  - It is necessary to work for their abolition. We must pray for the victims and their tormentors.

## II. RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS

### **Human Cloning - Catholic Church rejects:**

- Each person has the right to a unique identity
- Separation of Sex and Procreation
- The Instrumentalization of Life
  - Involves cloning embryos to harvest stem cells
  - Life begins the moment the clone is created...
  - Excess are tossed
- The "God Complex"

## II. RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS

### Respect for the dead

- **2299** The dying should be given attention and care to help them live their last moments in dignity and peace.
  - They will be helped by the prayer of their relatives, who must see to it that the sick receive at the proper time the sacraments that prepare them to meet the living God.
- **2300** The bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the Resurrection.
  - The burial of the dead is a corporal work of mercy;
  - it honors the children of God, who are temples of the Holy Spirit.
- **2301** Autopsies can be morally permitted for legal inquests or scientific research.
  - The free gift of organs after death is legitimate and can be meritorious.
  - The Church permits **cremation**, provided that it does not demonstrate a denial of faith in the resurrection of the body.<sup>93</sup>

### III. SAFEGUARDING PEACE

#### Peace, (2302 - 2306)

- By recalling the commandment, "You shall not kill," our Lord asked for peace of heart and denounced murderous anger and hatred as immoral.
- *Anger* is a desire for revenge. The Lord says, "Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment."
- **2303** Deliberate *hatred* is contrary to charity. Hatred of the neighbor is a sin when one deliberately wishes him evil. Hatred of the neighbor is a grave sin.
- **2304** Respect for and development of human life require peace. Peace is not merely the absence of war, and it is not limited to maintaining a balance of powers between adversaries.
- **2305** Earthly peace is the image and fruit of the *peace of Christ*, the messianic "Prince of Peace."
- **2306** renounce violence and bloodshed and, in order to safeguard human rights,
  - Voting

## III. SAFEGUARDING PEACE

### Avoiding war

- **2307** The fifth commandment forbids the intentional destruction of human life. Evils and injustices that accompany all war.
- **2308** All citizens and all governments are obliged to work for the avoidance of war.
- **2309** The strict conditions for *legitimate defense by military force* require rigorous consideration. At one and the same time:
  - the damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain;
  - all other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective;
  - there must be serious prospects of success;
  - the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated. The power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition.

# III. SAFEGUARDING PEACE

## Avoiding war, cont'd

➤ 2309, cont'd, Traditional concept the "just war" doctrine.

[**Just war is warfare that is justified by a moral or legal tradition.** Just war theory presumes that there are legitimate uses of war, but also sets moral boundaries on the waging of war.]

Conditions for *Jus ad Bellum* (Right to go to war)

**Just Cause:** Defense against grave, lasting, certain injustice, like aggression or protecting the innocent.

**Competent Authority:** Declared by a legitimate political authority, not private groups.

**Right Intention:** To achieve peace and justice, not revenge or territorial gain.

**Last Resort:** All peaceful, diplomatic options must be exhausted.

**Reasonable Chance of Success:** Must have a realistic prospect of achieving its goals.

**Proportionality (overall):** The good expected must outweigh the expected evil and destruction of war.

# III. SAFEGUARDING PEACE

## Avoiding war, cont'd

➤ 2309, cont'd, Traditional concept the "**just war**" doctrine.

The evaluation of these conditions for moral legitimacy belongs to the prudential judgment of those who have responsibility for the common good.

➤ 2310 Public authorities, in this case, have the right and duty to impose on citizens the *obligations necessary for national defense*.

➤ Our military personnel — sworn to serve their country in the armed forces — **are servants of the security and freedom of nations**.

➤ If they carry out their duty honorably, they truly contribute to the common good of the nation and the maintenance of peace.

### III. SAFEGUARDING PEACE

## Avoiding war, cont'd

- **2311** Public authorities — make equitable provision for those who for reasons of conscience refuse to bear arms, obliged to serve the human community in some other way.
- **2312** maintain *moral law during armed conflict*.
- **2313** Non-combatants, wounded soldiers, and prisoners must be respected and treated humanely.
- **2314** "Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation."

### III. SAFEGUARDING PEACE

## Avoiding war, cont'd

- **2315** The *accumulation of arms* strikes many as a paradoxically suitable way of deterring potential adversaries from war.
  - The *arms race* does not ensure peace.
  - *Over-armament* multiplies reasons for conflict and increases the danger of escalation.
- **2316** The *production and the sale of arms* affect the common good of nations and of the international community.
- **2317** Injustice, excessive economic or social inequalities, envy, distrust, and pride raging among men and nations constantly threaten peace and cause wars. Everything done to overcome these disorders contributes to building up peace and avoiding war:

Insofar as men are sinners, the threat of war hangs over them and will so continue until Christ comes again; but insofar as they can vanquish sin by coming together in charity, violence itself will be vanquished and these words will be fulfilled: "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

# IN BRIEF

**2318** "In [God's] hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind" (*Job* 12:10).

**2319** Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and holy God.

**2320** The murder of a human being is gravely contrary to the dignity of the person and the holiness of the Creator.

**2321** The prohibition of murder does not abrogate the right to render an unjust aggressor unable to inflict harm. Legitimate defense is a grave duty for whoever is responsible for the lives of others or the common good.

**2322** From its conception, the child has the right to life. Direct abortion, that is, abortion willed as an end or as a means, is a "criminal" practice (*GS* 27 § 3), gravely contrary to the moral law. The Church imposes the canonical penalty of excommunication for this crime against human life.

**2323** Because it should be treated as a person from conception, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed like every other human being.

# IN BRIEF

**2324** Intentional euthanasia, whatever its forms or motives, is murder. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator.

**2325** Suicide is seriously contrary to justice, hope, and charity. It is forbidden by the fifth commandment.

**2326** Scandal is a grave offense when by deed or omission it deliberately leads others to sin gravely.

**2327** Because of the evils and injustices that all war brings with it, we must do everything reasonably possible to avoid it. The Church prays: "From famine, pestilence, and war, O Lord, deliver us."

**2328** The Church and human reason assert the permanent validity of the moral law during armed conflicts. Practices deliberately contrary to the law of nations and to its universal principles are crimes.

**2329** "The arms race is one of the greatest curses on the human race and the harm it inflicts on the poor is more than can be endured" (*GS 81 § 3*).

**2330** "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (*Mt 5:9*).

## Closing Prayer

May God, the source of all patience and encouragement, enable us to live in perfect harmony with one another in the spirit of Christ Jesus.

With one heart and one voice  
may we glorify God,  
now and forever.

R/. Amen

## Psalm 139:1-16

### *The All-knowing and Ever-present God*

Lord, you have probed me, you know me:  
2 you know when I sit and stand;  
    you understand my thoughts from afar.  
3 You sift through my travels and my rest;  
    with all my ways you are familiar.  
4 Even before a word is on my tongue,  
    Lord, you know it all.  
5 Behind and before you encircle me  
    and rest your hand upon me.  
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
    far too lofty for me to reach.  
7 Where can I go from your spirit?  
    From your presence, where can I flee?  
8 If I ascend to the heavens, you are there;  
    if I lie down in Sheol, there you are.  
9 If I take the wings of dawn  
    and dwell beyond the sea,  
10 Even there your hand guides me,  
    your right hand holds me fast.

11 If I say, “Surely darkness shall hide me,  
    and night shall be my light” —  
12 Darkness is not dark for you,  
    and night shines as the day.  
    Darkness and light are but one.  
13 You formed my inmost being;  
    you knit me in my mother’s womb.  
14 I praise you, because I am wonderfully  
made;  
    wonderful are your works!  
    My very self you know.  
15 My bones are not hidden from you,  
When I was being made in secret,  
    fashioned in the depths of the earth.  
16 Your eyes saw me unformed;  
    in your book all are written down;  
    my days were shaped, before one came  
to be.