



St. Luke the Evangelist Parish
13 North St., Geneseo, NY




Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II
Fr. Jeffrey S. Tunnichliff
February 10, 2021

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Opening Prayer



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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Webinar Tips

- All participants are muted to reduce background noise
- If slides are not fully visible, check at the top center of your screen for “fit to window” under arrow.
- If you would like to ask a question, at the bottom of your screen you should see a box with the letters “Q & A”. Click it and you can type your question. It will show on my screen.
- In addition to the slides, you should see a video of me. It should appear in the upper right of your screen. It should not block any significant content on the slides. If it does, you can drag it around.

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Review

- Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness
- With rights comes the duty to ensure others have the same rights
- Where does the dignity of our lives come from?
- We want to help people make good choices

If you missed the first video,
you can watch it at
www.renewaloffaith.org/prolife.

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Life Begins at Conception

"The Congregation recalls the teachings found in the *Declaration on Procured Abortion*: "From the time that the ovum is fertilized, a new life is begun which is neither that of the father nor of the mother; it is rather the life of a new human being with his own growth. It would never be made human if it were not human already. To this perpetual evidence ... modern genetic science brings valuable confirmation. It has demonstrated that, from the first instant, the programme is fixed as to what this living being will be: a man, this individual-man with his characteristic aspects already well determined. Right from fertilization is begun the adventure of a human life, and each of its great capacities requires time ... to find its place and to be in a position to act"." (*Donum Vitae* (DV), Section 5.1.1, my emphasis).

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Life Begins at Conception – The Bible

- Jeremiah 1:5 "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."
- The story of Jesus' human life in the Bible did not begin at his birth. It began at his conception – the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38, especially verse 31). The same is true for John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-25, especially verse 24).

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What Does "Abortion" Mean?

- Webster's *II New Riverside University Dictionary* defines "abort" as "To terminate pregnancy prematurely."
- Miscarriage - unintended
- Conception – when the egg cell from the mother and the sperm cell from the father come together
- Born - emerging from the womb

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Changing Society's Perspective on Abortion

- Illegal
 - Our goal is not simply to make abortion illegal (as well as for euthanasia and the death penalty)
 - Others could change the laws in the future (legal) → we need to change people's attitudes
 - The importance of public policy advocacy
 - NYS Catholic Conference - www.nyscatholic.org
 - USCCB – www.usccb.org
 - Diocese of Rochester – www.dor.org
- Unthinkable and undesirable
 - We need to consider why someone might have an abortion and what we can do to help them.

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Politicians and Abortion Legislation


Receiving Communion and Voting on Legislation

- One may “permit our moral judgments to be shaped by the current state of our law – supposing mistakenly that what the law permits must be morally permissible” (Meilaender, 25).
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2284 “Scandal is a grave offense if by deed or omission another is deliberately led into a grave offense.” (see also Matthew 18:6, 1 Corinthians 8:10-13)

↓

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2286 “Therefore, they are guilty of scandal who establish laws or social structures leading to the decline of morals and the corruption of religious practice, or to “social conditions that, intentionally or not, make Christian conduct and obedience to the Commandments difficult and practically impossible.” ”

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Reasons Why Someone Might Choose Abortion - **No judging!**

- “Decisions that go against life sometimes arise from difficult or even tragic situations of profound suffering, loneliness, a total lack of economic prospects, depression, and anxiety about the future” (*Evangelium Vitae* EV, 18).
 - Remember in the Prayer of St. Francis, we pray that the Lord helps us to sow hope where there is despair and light where there is darkness
 - Station 5 - Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the Cross
 - Station 6 - Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

“Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36).

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Reasons Why Someone Might Choose Abortion

- Feel unable to take care of the child
 - If you want to help women choose life, continue to help them after baby is born (example - pregnancy centers giving out diapers)
- The Corporal Works of Mercy
 - Feed the hungry
 - Give drink to the thirsty
 - Shelter the homeless
 - Clothe the Naked

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Reasons Why Someone Might Choose Abortion cont'd

- Baby's health
 - I can't imagine being pregnant and finding out your child won't live beyond birth but even more so I can't see how an abortion helps
 - Pre-natal diagnosis (see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2274)
 - Is the point to:
 - Seek treatment
 - Prepare the parents and home for special needs
 - Or to choose abortion?
 - Offering emotional and spiritual support as well as help at home

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Reasons Why Someone Might Choose Abortion cont'd

- Mother's health
 - "47. Operations, treatments, and medications that have as **their direct purpose** the cure of a proportionately serious pathological condition of a pregnant woman are permitted when they cannot be safely postponed until the unborn child is viable, even if they will result in the death of the unborn child. (USCCB, *Ethical and Religious Directives*)"
 - ABORTION CAN NEVER BE THE INTENT
 - If we are discussing the mother's health, we must include her mental health following the abortion.

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Reasons Why Someone Might Choose Abortion cont'd

- Hide "shame" of getting pregnant
- "Unwanted child"
 - If you don't want to have a child, then make responsible sexual decisions
 - Rape (a **very** traumatic situation but two wrongs don't make a right)
 - Incest
- With an "unwanted child" there is an alternative to abortion - Putting the child up for adoption (acknowledge it doesn't address all the "issues")

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When One Has Had Abortion

- "Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36).
- "Catholic health care providers should be ready to offer compassionate physical, psychological, moral, and spiritual care to those persons who have suffered from the trauma of abortion" (USCCB, *Ethical and Religious Directives*, 46.)
- www.hopeafterabortion.com – Project Rachel
- Microchimerism – evidence suggest that cells of the baby remain in the mother

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Reasons Why "Society" Supports Abortion

- Believe that life begins at birth, not conception
- Overemphasized freedom
 - "But the most remarkable development of all is to be seen in man's stupendous progress in the domination and rational organization of the forces of nature to the point that he is endeavoring to extend this control over every aspect of his own life—over his body, over his mind and emotions, over his social life, and even over the laws that regulate the transmission of life" (*Humanae Vitae*, HV, 2).

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Reasons Why “Society” Supports Abortion cont’d

- Do not value life in general
 - They think a baby does not contribute to society
 - Likewise, regarding euthanasia, once one grows old and dependent, some see them as a burden to society

“China’s five-year plan proposal stresses eugenics in birth policy, says expert” by Courtney Mares. Catholic News Agency. 11/13/20. https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/chinas-five-year-plan-proposal-stresses-eugenics-in-birth-policy-says-expert-96671?fbclid=IwAR35bhf_HjROb0IHIVf13YKN47Wc3zYum3Cgv9SA-xfsSZ73EIkiz_La8WYY (see HV 17)

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Reasons Why “Society” Supports Abortion cont’d— Population Control

“In the first place there is the rapid increase in population which has made many fear that world population is going to grow faster than available resources, with the consequence that many families and developing countries would be faced with greater hardships. This can easily induce public authorities to be tempted to take even harsher measures to avert this danger. There is also the fact that not only working and housing conditions but the greater demands made both in the economic and educational field pose a living situation in which it is frequently difficult these days to provide properly for a large family” (HV, 2).

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Briefly...Contraception

“The fact is, as experience shows, that new life is not the result of each and every act of sexual intercourse. God has wisely ordered laws of nature and the incidence of fertility in such a way that successive births are already naturally spaced through the inherent operation of these laws. The Church, nevertheless, in urging men to the observance of the precepts of the natural law, which it interprets by its constant doctrine, teaches that each and every marital act must of necessity retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life” (HV, 11).

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II


Briefly...Contraception

“15. On the other hand, the Church does not consider at all illicit the use of those therapeutic means necessary to cure bodily diseases, even if a foreseeable impediment to procreation should result there from—provided such impediment is not directly intended for any motive whatsoever.” (HV, 15).

St. Paul VI Institute - Experts in Fertility Care and NaPro Technology - <https://popepaulvi.com/>

The Creighton Fertility model is one version of NFP. It can also be used to help a couple get pregnant - <https://popepaulvi.com/fertilitycare-center-of-omaha/>

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Briefly...Contraception

"If therefore there are well-grounded reasons for spacing births, arising from the physical or psychological condition of husband or wife, or from external circumstances, the Church teaches that married people may then take advantage of the natural cycles immanent in the reproductive system and engage in marital intercourse only during those times that are infertile, thus controlling birth in a way which does not in the least offend the moral principles which we have just explained. Neither the Church nor her doctrine is inconsistent when she considers it lawful for married people to take advantage of the infertile period but condemns as always unlawful the use of means which directly prevent conception, even when the reasons given for the later practice may appear to be upright and serious. In reality, these two cases are completely different. In the former the married couple rightly use a faculty provided them by nature. In the later they obstruct the natural development of the generative process" (HV, 16, my emphasis).

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Briefly...Contraception Mentality

- "Another effect that gives cause for alarm is that a man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman, and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his own desires, no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection." (HV, 17).
- "Today, as in the past, slavery is rooted in a notion of the human person that allows him or her to be treated as an object" (Fratelli Tutti, 24).
- Pregnancy is not a disease

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Questions From Part I Evaluations

- In Vitro Fertilization (IVF)
 - IVF, and other similar techniques separate procreation from sexual/marital intimacy, treating it more like a manufacturing process than an act of love creating life (see "Donum Vitae").
 - How many embryos get destroyed when no longer wanted or used for research?
- Embryo adoption
- Coronavirus Vaccine
 - Material from the Vatican and the USCCB is available online on our diocesan Life Issues website (<https://www.liferoc.org>) and <https://www.usccb.org/prolife/biomedical-research>.
 - Vaccines from aborted fetus lines
 - Is one morally obligated to take the vaccine?

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The Fifth Commandment

You shall not kill.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 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." (this entire paragraph is a quote from *Donum Vitae*, 5, my emphasis).

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Self-Defense

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 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**" (my emphasis).

*We will cover military action resulting in deaths in Part IV when we discuss Just War Theory.

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Death Penalty

- Admittedly, the death penalty does **not intend** to take **innocent** life.
- If we support the death penalty, what does that say about our respect for life in general?
 - That there is a limit on the value of preserving life?
 - That there comes a point when murder is okay?
 - The death penalty may not intend to take **innocent** life but it does intend to take a life.
 - Slippery slope
 - Take the high road

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Who was the first to
say no to the death
penalty?

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II



Who was the first to
say no to the death
penalty?

God was.

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Death Penalty – History

- God said no death penalty for Cain killing Abel
 - “If anyone kills Cain, Cain shall be avenged seven times. So the LORD put a mark on Cain, so that no one would kill him at sight” (Genesis 4:15).
 - “Not even a murderer loses his personal dignity, and God himself pledges to guarantee this” (EV, 9).

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Death Penalty – History cont'd

- Yes, Leviticus 24:19-20 says, “Anyone who inflicts a permanent injury on his or her neighbor shall receive the same in return: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The same injury that one gives another shall be inflicted in return.”
- However, Jesus says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on [your] right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow” (Matthew 5:38-42).

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Death Penalty - History cont'd

- Pope Francis, “From the earliest centuries of the Church, some were clearly opposed to capital punishment. Lactantius, for example, held that “there ought to be no exception at all; that it is always unlawful to put a man to death”. Pope Nicholas I urged that efforts be made “to free from the punishment of death not only each of the innocent, but all the guilty as well”. (*Fratelli Tutti*, 265). (Lactantius c325, Pope Nicholas I c. 867)

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Death Penalty - History cont'd

- “During the trial of the murderers of two priests, Saint Augustine asked the judge not to take the life of the assassins with this argument “**We do not object to your depriving these wicked men of the freedom to commit further crimes.** Our desire is rather that **justice be satisfied without the taking of their lives** or the maiming of their bodies in any part” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 265).
- Later in same paragraph, “Do not let the atrocity of their sins feed a desire for **vengeance**, but desire instead to **heal** the wounds which those deeds have inflicted on their souls” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 265 from St. Augustine’s “Epistola ad Marcellinum 133, 1.2: PL 33, 509).

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Death Penalty – Today

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2267 (revised by Pope Francis in 2018)
"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."

- Linda Bordon, "Pope Francis: 'death penalty inadmissible.'" 8/2/2018.
<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2018-08/pope-francis-cdf-ccc-death-penalty-revision-ladaria.html>.

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

What is the Point of Punishment?

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2266

"Legitimate public authority has the **right and the duty to inflict punishment proportionate** to the gravity of the offense. Punishment has the **primary aim of redressing the disorder introduced by the offense**. When it is willingly accepted by the guilty party, it assumes the **value of expiation**. Punishment then, in addition to **defending public order and protecting people's safety**, has a **medicinal scope**: as far as possible, it must contribute to the correction of the guilty party." (my emphasis)

For more on the purpose of punishment see my blog article, "Receiving a Penance", (September 1, 2020) online at <http://blog.renewaloffaith.org/blog/?p=4776>

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Vengeance, Compassion, and Conversion

"When dwelling on legal and moral arguments concerning the death penalty, we should do so not with vengeance and anger in our hearts, but with the compassion and mercy of our Lord in mind. It is also important to remember that penalties imposed on criminals always need to allow for the possibility of the criminal to show regret for the evil committed and to change his or her life for the better" (*United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, 395).

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Death Penalty Revenge, Forgiving, and Forgetting

"Those who truly forgive do not forget. Instead, they **choose not to yield to the same destructive force** that caused them so much suffering. They break the vicious circle...Revenge never truly satisfies victims...Revenge resolves nothing" (*Fratelli Tutti*, 251, my emphasis).

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Death Penalty – Accountability

- To reject the death penalty is NOT to reject accountability just as forgiving someone for stealing doesn't mean they don't have to make amends
- Cain was not killed but he was punished, "Now you are banned from the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. If you till the ground, it shall no longer give you its produce. You shall become a constant wanderer on the earth" (Genesis 4:11-12). To which Cain responds, "My punishment is too great to bear" (Genesis 4:13).

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Death Penalty – Accountability

Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy
 "Whereas in forgiveness the victim forgoes the right to vengeance, *pardon* releases an offender from punishment altogether" (xiv).

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Death Penalty – Accountability

"Nonetheless, because they believe that the state is ordained by God to maintain order in the larger world, they expect that the state will organize a police force, imprison lawbreakers, and conduct war. "We fully expect a killer to go to jail," said an Amish elder. "We're not naïve. **We would never want a killer turned loose,**" added a deacon. "It's the government's job to punish evildoers." As the tragedy unfolded in Nickel Mines, the Amish readily accepted the intervention of the police and thanked them profusely for their help" (Kraybill, *Amish Grace*, 170, my emphasis).

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Future Schedule

- Second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm
 - March 10th
 - April 14th
- When you exit this webinar a short evaluation questionnaire should come up to invite your feedback.
- The slides for this presentation will be available online at www.renewaloffaith.org/prolife along with registration information for the next webinar.

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Treating Life with Dignity and Love, Part II

Related Articles on My Blog

- "Biology Makes Me Pro-Life", January 31, 2020
<http://blog.renewaloffaith.org/blog/?p=3124>
- On the death penalty - "What About Accountability", December 7, 2020. <http://blog.renewaloffaith.org/blog/?p=5395>
- For more on the purpose of punishment see my blog article, "Receiving a Penance", (September 1, 2020)
<http://blog.renewaloffaith.org/blog/?p=4776>
- "What About Accountability?" (December 7, 2020) online at
<http://blog.renewaloffaith.org/blog/?p=5395>
- Fr. Jeffrey S. Tunncliff, "Homily for 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A" covering Public Policy weekend on issue of Assisted Suicide. February 8, 2000. <http://blog.renewaloffaith.org/blog/?p=3142>
- Fr. Jeffrey S. Tunncliff, "27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A" Homily given on Respect Life Sunday, 10/4/20")
<http://blog.renewaloffaith.org/blog/?p=5007>.

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Resources cont'd

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum Vitae – Instruction on Respect For Human Life In Its Origin and On the Dignity of Procreation: Replies to Certain Questions of the Day*. February 22, 1987. Accessed online at
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Resources cont'd


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Resources cont'd

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Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*. July 25, 1968. Available online at http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html

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Resources (cont'd)

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Resources (cont'd)

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USCCB, *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*. Washington, DC: USCCB. 2006.

Vatican News, "Pope Francis: 'death penalty inadmissible,'" August 2, 2018. Available online at <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2018-08/pope-francis-cdf-ccc-death-penalty-revision-ladaria.html>

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