

Session D

Theme: Life and Dignity of the Human Person



Scripture Reading & Discussion Questions

A reading from Genesis 1:26-31:

Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground."

God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them.

God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth."

God also said: "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground, I give all the green plants for food."

And so it happened. God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed--the sixth day.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What does the teaching that we are all created in the image and likeness of God mean to you?
- 2) What implications does this teaching have for the way we live our lives?
- 3) What implications does this teaching have for our roles as citizens?

Faithful Citizenship Reading and Discussion Questions

A reading from *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States*:

Human life is sacred. The dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. Direct attacks on innocent persons are never morally acceptable, at any stage or in any condition. In our society, human life is especially under direct attack from abortion. Other direct threats to the sanctity of human life include euthanasia, human cloning, and the destruction of human embryos for research (no. 44)

Catholic teaching about the dignity of life calls us to oppose torture, unjust war, and the use of the death penalty; to prevent genocide and attacks against noncombatants; to oppose racism; and to overcome poverty and suffering. Nations are called to protect the right to life by seeking effective ways to combat evil and terror without resorting to armed conflicts except as a last resort, always seeking first to resolve disputes by peaceful means. We revere the lives of children in the womb, the lives of persons dying in war and from starvation, and indeed the lives of all human beings as children of God (no. 45).

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Name ways that human life is threatened in our society. How can you respond?
- 2) Describe a situation when you found it difficult to recognize the God-given dignity in another person. How could or did Catholic teaching on human life and dignity shape your response to the person or situation?
- 3) If the central moral measure of society is whether it protects and respects the life and dignity of the human person, how do you feel our society is doing? Are there certain groups of people who are not treated with the respect they deserve?
- 4) How does a belief in the dignity of every person shape your participation in political life?