

## LIFE AS A GIFT FROM GOD

The covenant between God and humanity 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. [W]hoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image. (CCC, #2260)

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." "My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth." (CCC, #2270)

The dignity of a person must be recognized in every human being from conception to natural death. This fundamental principle expresses a great "yes" to human life and must be at the center of ethical reflection on biomedical research, which has an ever greater importance in today's world. (CDF, DP, September 8, 2008, #1)

The gift of life which God the Creator and Father has entrusted to man calls him to appreciate the inestimable value of what he has been given and to take responsibility for it. (CDF, DV, February 22, 1987, Introduction; #1)

From the moment of conception, the life of every human being is to be respected in an absolute way because man is the only creature on earth that God has "wished for himself" and the spiritual soul of each man is "immediately created by God;" his whole being bears the image of the Creator. (CDF, DV, February 22, 1987, Introduction; #5)

In reality, the origin of a human person is the result of an act of giving. The one conceived must be the fruit of his parents' love. He cannot be desired or conceived as the product of an intervention of medical or biological techniques; that would be equivalent to reducing him to an object of scientific technology. No one may subject the coming of a child into the world to conditions of technical efficiency which are to be evaluated according to standards of control and dominion. (CDF, DV, February 22, 1987, II B 4 c)

Human life is the basis of all goods, and is the necessary source and condition of every human activity and of all society. Most people regard life as something sacred and hold that no one may dispose of it at will, but believers see in life something greater, namely a gift of God's love, which they are called upon to preserve and make fruitful. (CDF, Declaration on Euthanasia, May 5, 1980)

The greatness of the human act consists precisely in surpassing the moment itself in which it is completed to involve the whole orientation of a life and lead it to take its position before the absolute. That is already true for daily activity: *a fortiori* it is true for an act which involves, with the reciprocal love of husband and wife, their future, and that

of their posterity. (Pius XII, *Allocution to the Members of the II World Congress of Fertility and Sterility*, May 19, 1956)

[On the education of children about human life as a gift from God:]

In general, the first sexual information to be given to a small child does not deal with genital sexuality, but rather with pregnancy and the birth of a brother or sister. The child's natural curiosity is stimulated, for example, when it sees the signs of pregnancy in its mother and experiences waiting for a baby. Parents can take advantage of this happy experience in order to communicate some simple facts about pregnancy, but always in the deepest context of wonder at the creative work of God, who wants the new life he has given to be cared for in the mother's body, near her heart. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #76)

Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. (The Holy See, *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, Article 4; Quoting *GS*, #51; *FC*, #26)

[T]he gaze of the Church is full of trust because “Life will triumph: this is a sure hope for us. Yes, life will triumph because truth, goodness, joy and true progress are on the side of life. God, who loves life and gives it generously, is on the side of life” (CDF, *DP*, September 8, 2008, #3; Quoting *JPII Address to the Participants in the Seventh Assembly of the Pontifical Academy of Life*, March 3, 2001, #3)

By treating the human embryo as mere “laboratory material,” *the concept itself of human dignity is also subjected to alteration and discrimination*. Dignity belongs equally to every single human being, irrespective of his parents’ desires, his social condition, educational formation or level of physical development. (CDF, *DP*, September 8, 2008, #22)

If at other times in history, while the concept and requirements of human dignity were accepted in general, discrimination was practiced on the basis of race, religion or social condition, today there is a no less serious and unjust form of discrimination which leads to the non-recognition of the ethical and legal status of human beings suffering from serious diseases or disabilities. It is forgotten that sick and disabled people are not some separate category of humanity; in fact, sickness and disability are part of the human condition and affect every individual, even when there is no direct experience of it. Such discrimination is immoral and must therefore be considered legally unacceptable, just as there is a duty to eliminate cultural, economic and social barriers which undermine the full recognition and protection of disabled or ill people. (CDF, *DP*, September 8, 2008, #22)