



Word of Life

February 2012

February 5th Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

For nurses and caregivers to family members:
that the Lord will increase their patience, gentleness, and strength
to continue witnessing to the dignity of each person in their care;
We pray to the Lord:

February 12th Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

For abused and neglected children:
that their circumstances will be known, their safety assured,
and their sense of self-worth restored;
We pray to the Lord:

February 19th Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

For couples struggling with infertility:
that the Lord will bless them with children, whether by natural means or adoption;
We pray to the Lord:

February 26th First Sunday of Lent

For Catholics in political life:
that a right understanding of our faith will inform their policy decisions,
especially decisions involving the lives of vulnerable human beings;
We pray to the Lord:



Our society, which all too often questions the inestimable value of life, every life, needs you [young people with disabilities]: in a decisive way you help build the civilization of love. What is more, you play a leading role in that civilization. As sons and daughters of the Church, you offer the Lord your lives, with all their ups and downs, cooperating with him and somehow becoming “part of the treasury of compassion so greatly needed by the human race” (*Spe Salvi*, 40).

~ Pope Benedict XVI, Remarks at the San José Foundation for Disabled Youth, Madrid, August 20, 2011

God loves us. This is the great truth of our life; it is what makes everything else meaningful. We are not the product of blind chance or absurdity; instead our life originates as part of a loving plan of God.

~ Pope Benedict XVI, Prayer Vigil with Young People at Cuatro Vientos Airport, August 20, 2011

The Church’s position on the matter of abortion is unambiguous. The child in his or her mother’s womb is a human life which must be protected. Abortion, which is the destruction of an innocent unborn child, is contrary to God’s will, for the value and dignity of human life must be protected from conception to natural death. The Church . . . must be committed to offering help and support to women and couples tempted to seek an abortion, while remaining close to those who have had this tragic experience and helping them to grow in respect for life. She acknowledges the courage of governments that have legislated against the culture of death – of which abortion is a dramatic expression – in favour of the culture of life.

~ Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus* (70), November 19, 2011

Serious threats loom over human life in Africa. . . . Malaria, as well as tuberculosis and AIDS, decimate the African peoples and gravely compromise their socio-economic life. The problem of AIDS, in particular, clearly calls for a medical and pharmaceutical response. This is not enough, however: the problem goes deeper. Above all, it is an ethical problem. The change of behaviour that it requires – for example, sexual abstinence, rejection of sexual promiscuity, fidelity within marriage – ultimately involves the question of integral development, which demands a global approach and a global response from the Church. For if it is to be effective, the prevention of AIDS must be based on a sex education that is itself grounded in an anthropology anchored in the natural law and enlightened by the word of God and the Church’s teaching.

~ Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus* (72), November 19, 2011

No society, however developed it may be, can do without fraternal service inspired by love. “Whoever wants to eliminate love is preparing to eliminate man as such. There will always be suffering which cries out for consolation and help. There will always be loneliness. There will always be situations of material need where help in the form of concrete love of neighbour is indispensable” (*Deus Caritas Est*, 28). It is love which soothes hearts that are hurt, forlorn or abandoned. It is love which brings or restores peace to human hearts and establishes it in our midst.

~ Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus* (29), November 19, 2011