



## Sample Bulletin Inserts: The Right to Life and the Dignity of the Human Person



### **From *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (No. 44-45)**

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.

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.

### **Other Quotes on This Theme from Church Teaching**

The Second Vatican Council, in a passage which retains all its relevance today, forcefully condemned a number of crimes and attacks against human life. Thirty years later, taking up the words of the Council and with the same forcefulness I repeat that condemnation in the name of the whole Church, certain that I am interpreting the genuine sentiment of every upright conscience:

*Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where people are treated as mere instruments of gain rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others like them are infamies indeed.*

*They poison human society, and they do more harm to those who practice them than to those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator.*

Pope John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life*, #3, 1995

Abortion and euthanasia have become preeminent threats to human dignity because they directly attack life itself, the most fundamental human good and the condition for all others. They are committed against those who are weakest and most defenseless, those who are genuinely "the poorest of the poor." They are endorsed increasingly without the veil of euphemism, as supporters of abortion and euthanasia freely concede these are killing even as they promote them. Sadly, they are practiced in those communities which ordinarily provide a safe haven for the weak -- the family and the healing professions. Such direct attacks on human life, once crimes, are today legitimized by governments sworn to protect the weak and marginalized.

U.S. Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics*, 1998



## Sample Bulletin Inserts: Call to Family, Community, and Participation



### From *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (No. 46-48)

The human person is not only sacred but also social. Full human development takes place in relationship with others. The family—based on marriage between a man and a woman—is the first and fundamental unit of society and is a sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children. It should be defended and strengthened, not redefined or undermined by permitting same-sex unions or other distortions of marriage. Respect for the family should be reflected in every policy and program. It is important to uphold parents' rights and responsibilities to care for their children, including the right to choose their children's education.

How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects the common good and the capacity of individuals to develop their full potential. Every person and association has a right and a duty to participate actively in shaping society and to promote the well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

The principle of subsidiarity reminds us that larger institutions in society should not overwhelm or interfere with smaller or local institutions, yet larger institutions have essential responsibilities when the more local institutions cannot adequately protect human dignity, meet human needs, and advance the common good.

### Other Quotes on This Theme from Church Teaching

The human person is not only sacred, but social. We realize our dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community.

U.S. Catholic Bishops, *A Century of Social Teaching*, 1990

The family has major contributions to make in addressing questions of social justice. It is where we learn and act on our values.

U.S. Catholic Bishops, *A Century of Social Teaching*, 1990

A central test of political, legal, and economic institutions is what they do to people, what they do for people, and how people participate in them.

U.S. Catholic Bishops, *A Century of Social Teaching*, 1990

[B]asic justice demands the establishment of minimum levels of participation in the life of the human community for all persons. The ultimate injustice is for a person or group to be treated actively or abandoned passively as if they were nonmembers of the human race. To treat people this way is effectively to say they simply do not count as human beings.

U.S. Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, #77, 1986

The family, grounded on marriage freely contracted, monogamous and indissoluble, is and must be considered the first and essential cell of human society. From this it follows that most careful provision must be made for the family both in economic and social matters as well as in those which are of a cultural and moral nature, all of which look to the strengthening of the family and helping it carry out its function.

Pope John XXIII, *Peace on Earth*, #16, 1963



## Sample Bulletin Inserts: Rights and Responsibilities



### From *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (No.49)

Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if human rights are protected and basic responsibilities are met. Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible, and a right to access to those things required for human decency—food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing, freedom of religion and family life. The right to exercise religious freedom publicly and privately by individuals and institutions along with freedom of conscience need to be constantly defended. In a fundamental way, the right to free expression of religious beliefs protects all other rights. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society. Rights should be understood and exercised in a moral framework rooted in the dignity of the human person.

### Other Quotes on This Theme from Church Teaching

Catholic teaching has a long and rich tradition in defending the right to migrate. Based on the life and teachings of Jesus, the Church's teaching has provided the basis for the development of basic principles regarding the right to migrate for those attempting to exercise their God-given human rights.

U.S. Bishops, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, #28, 2003

The Church recognizes the right of a sovereign state to control its borders in furtherance of the common good. It also recognizes the right of human persons to migrate so that they can realize their God-given rights. These teachings complement each other. While the sovereign state may impose reasonable limits on immigration, the common good is not served when the basic human rights of the individual are violated. In the current condition of the world, in which global poverty and persecution are rampant, the presumption is that persons must migrate in order to support and protect themselves and that nations who are able to receive them should do so whenever possible.

U.S. Bishops, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, #39, 2003

Human rights are the minimum conditions for life in community. In Catholic teaching, human rights include not only civil and political rights but also economic rights.... This means that when people are without a chance to earn a living, and must go hungry and homeless, they are being denied basic rights. Society must ensure that these rights are protected.

U.S. Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, #17, 1986

There is a growing awareness of the sublime dignity of human persons, who stand above all things and whose rights and duties are universal and inviolable. They ought, therefore, to have ready access to all that is necessary for living a genuinely human life: for example, food, clothing, housing, the right freely to choose their state of life and set up a family, the right to education, work, to their good name, to respect, to proper knowledge, the right to act according to the dictates of conscience and to safeguard their privacy, and rightful freedom, including freedom of religion.

Second Vatican Council, *The Church in the Modern World*, #26, 1965

It is clearly laid down that the paramount task assigned to government officials is that of recognizing, respecting, reconciling, protecting and promoting the rights and duties of citizens.

Pope John XXIII, *Peace on Earth*, #77, 1963



## Sample Bulletin Inserts: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable



### From *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (No. 50-51)

While the common good embraces all, those who are weak, vulnerable, and most in need deserve preferential concern. A basic moral test for our society is how we treat the most vulnerable in our midst. In a society marred by deepening disparities between rich and poor, Scripture gives us the story of the Last Judgment (see Mt 25:31-46) and reminds us that we will be judged by our response to the “least among us.” The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains:

*Those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense, and liberation through numerous works of charity which remain indispensable always and everywhere. (no. 2448)*

Pope Benedict XVI has taught that “love for widows and orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind, is as essential to [the Church] as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching of the Gospel” (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 22). This preferential option for the poor and vulnerable includes all who are marginalized in our nation and beyond—unborn children, persons with disabilities, the elderly and terminally ill, and victims of injustice and oppression.

### Other Quotes on This Theme from Church Teaching

The needs of the poor take priority over the desires of the rich; the rights of workers over the maximization of profits.

Pope John Paul II, Address on Christian Unity in a Technological Age, Toronto, 1984

Decisions must be judged in light of what they do for the poor, what they do to the poor, and what they enable the poor to do for themselves. This ‘option for the poor’ means strengthening the whole community by assisting those who are most vulnerable.

U.S. Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, #16, 1986

The way society responds to the needs of the poor through its public policies is the litmus test of its justice or injustice.

U.S. Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, #123, 1986

In teaching us charity, the Gospel instructs us in the preferential respect due to the poor and the special situation they have in society: the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others.

Pope Paul VI, *A Call to Action*, #23, 1971

"If someone who has the riches of this world sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1 Jn 3:17). It is well known how strong were the words used by the Fathers of the Church to describe the proper attitude of persons who possess anything towards persons in need. To quote Saint Ambrose: "You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor person. You are handing over to him what is his. For what has been given in common for the use of all, you have arrogated to yourself. The world is given to all, and not only to the rich."

Pope Paul VI, *On the Development of Peoples*, #23, 1967



## Sample Bulletin Inserts: Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers



### From *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (No. 52)

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. Employers contribute to the common good through the services or products they provide and by creating jobs that uphold the dignity and rights of workers—to productive work, to decent and just wages, to adequate benefits and security in their old age, to the choice of whether to organize and join unions, to the opportunity for legal status for immigrant workers, to private property, and to economic initiative. Workers also have responsibilities—to provide a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, to treat employers and co-workers with respect, and to carry out their work in ways that contribute to the common good. Workers, employers, and unions should not only advance their own interests, but also work together to advance economic justice and the well-being of all.

### Other Quotes on This Theme from Church Teaching

The obligation to earn one's bread by the sweat of one's brow also presumes the right to do so.

Pope John Paul, II, *The Hundredth Year*, #43, 1991

[I]t is respect for the objective rights of the worker—every kind of worker: manual or intellectual, industrial or agricultural, etc.—that must constitute *the adequate and fundamental criterion* for shaping the whole economy...

Pope John Paul II, *On Human Work*, #17, 1981

Awareness that man's work is a participation in God's activity ought to permeate, as the [Second Vatican] Council teaches, even "*the most ordinary everyday activities*."

Pope John Paul II, *On Human Work*, #25, 1981

The Church fully supports *the right of workers* to form unions or other associations to secure their *rights* to fair wages and working conditions.

U.S. Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, #104, 1986

All work has a threefold moral significance. First, it is a principle way that people exercise the distinctive human capacity for self-expression and self-realization. Second, it is the ordinary way for human beings to fulfill their material needs. Finally, work enables people to contribute to the well-being of the larger community. Work is not only for one's self. It is for one's family, for the nation, and indeed for the benefit of the entire human family.

U.S. Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, #97, 1986

We consider it our duty to reaffirm that the remuneration of work is not something that can be left to the laws of the marketplace; nor should it be a decision left to the will of the more powerful. It must be determined in accordance with justice and equity; which means that workers must be paid a wage which allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfill their family obligations in a worthy manner.

Pope John XXIII, *Mother and Teacher*, #71, 1961

In the first place, the worker must be paid a wage sufficient to support him and his family.

Pope Pius XI, *The Fortieth Year*, #71, 1941



## Sample Bulletin Inserts: Solidarity



### From *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (No. 53)

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions and requires us to eradicate racism and address the extreme poverty and disease plaguing so much of the world. Solidarity also includes the Scriptural call to welcome the stranger among us— including immigrants seeking work, a safe home, education for their children, and a decent life for their families. In light of the Gospel's invitation to be peacemakers, our commitment to solidarity with our neighbors—at home and abroad—also demands that we promote peace and pursue justice in a world marred by terrible violence and conflict. Decisions on the use of force should be guided by traditional moral criteria and undertaken only as a last resort. As Pope Paul VI taught: "If you want peace, work for justice" (*World Day of Peace Message*, January 1, 1972).

### Other Quotes on This Theme from Church Teaching

To overcome today's individualistic mentality, a concrete commitment to solidarity and charity is needed.

Pope John Paul II, *The Hundredth Year*, #49, 1991

Solidarity binds all together as members of a common family.

Pope John XXIII, *Mother and Teacher*, #157, 1961

Solidarity helps us to see the other as our neighbor in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God.

Pope John Paul II, *On Social Concern*, #39, 1987

In a *linked and limited world*, our responsibilities to one another cross national and other boundaries. "We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers."

U.S. Bishops, *A Century of Social Teaching*, 1990

How could the idea have developed that Jesus' message is narrowly individualistic and aimed only at each person singly? How did we arrive at this interpretation of the "salvation of the soul" as a flight from responsibility for the whole, and how did we come to conceive the Christian project as a selfish search for salvation which rejects the idea of serving others?

Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, #16, 2007

The true measure of humanity is essentially determined in relationship to suffering and to the sufferer. This holds true both for the individual and for society. A society unable to accept its suffering members and incapable of helping to share their suffering and to bear it inwardly through "com-passion" is a cruel and inhuman society. Yet society cannot accept its suffering members and support them in their trials unless individuals are capable of doing so themselves; moreover, the individual cannot accept another's suffering unless he personally is able to find meaning in suffering, a path of purification and growth in maturity, a journey of hope. Indeed, to accept the "other" who suffers, means that I take up his suffering in such a way that it becomes mine also. Because it has now become a shared suffering, though, in which another person is present, this suffering is penetrated by the light of love.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, #38, 2007



## Sample Bulletin Inserts: Caring for God's Creation



### From *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (No. 54)

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of God's creation. Care for the earth is a duty of our faith and a sign of our concern for all people. We should strive to live simply to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. We have a moral obligation to protect the planet on which we live—to respect God's creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for human beings, especially children at their most vulnerable stages of development. As stewards called by God to share the responsibility for the future of the earth, we should work for a world in which people respect and protect all of creation and seek to live simply in harmony with it for the sake of future generations.

### Other Quotes on This Theme from Church Teaching

As people of religious faith, we bishops believe that the atmosphere that supports life on earth is a God-given gift, one we must respect and protect. It unites us as one human family. If we harm the atmosphere, we dishonor our Creator and the gift of creation. The values of our faith call us to humility, sacrifice, and a respect for life and the natural gifts God has provided. Pope John Paul II reminds us in his statement *The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility* that "respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation, which is called to join man in praising God." In that spirit of praise and thanksgiving to God for the wonders of creation, we Catholic bishops call for a civil dialogue and prudent and constructive action to protect God's precious gift of the earth's atmosphere with a sense of genuine solidarity and justice for all God's children.

U.S. Bishops, *Global Climate Change*, #40, 2001

At its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures. It is about the future of God's creation and the one human family. It is about protecting both "the human environment" and the natural environment. It is about our human stewardship of God's creation and our responsibility to those who come after us. With these reflections, we seek to offer a word of caution and a plea for genuine dialogue as the United States and other nations face decisions about how best to respond to the challenges of global climate change.

U.S. Bishops, *Global Climate Change*, #3, 2001

Generations yet unborn will bear the cost for our failure to act today.

U.S. Bishops, *Renewing the Earth*, 1991

The dominion granted to man by the Creator is not an absolute power, nor can one speak of a freedom to "use and misuse," or to dispose of things as one pleases.

Pope John Paul, II, *On Social Concerns*, #34, 1987

With many thousands of young people visiting Australia at this time, it is appropriate to reflect upon the kind of world we are handing on to future generations. In the words of your national anthem [Australia], this land "abounds in nature's gifts, of beauty rich and rare". The wonder of God's creation reminds us of the need to protect the environment and to exercise responsible stewardship of the goods of the earth.

Benedict XVI, Opening Ceremony Address at World Youth Day in Sydney, 2008