

LEARN: Week #1—Respect Life Sunday

The Inviolable Sanctity of Human Life: A Catholic Perspective on Respect Life Sunday

As Catholics, we believe every human life is a precious gift from God—sacred, inviolable, and worthy of protection from conception until natural death.

Core Themes:

1. **Life is Sacred from the Moment of Conception** – The Church teaches that "from the time that the ovum is fertilized, a life is begun which is neither that of the father nor the mother; it is rather the life of a new human being with his own growth."
2. **The Tragedy of Abortion** –The Church has consistently affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion since the first century, a teaching that remains unchangeable. Direct abortion is considered "gravely contrary to the moral law" and, alongside infanticide, is an "abominable crime" and an "unspeakable crime".
3. **Culture of Life vs. Culture of Death** – The Church calls us to resist societal trends that devalue life and to build a culture that welcomes it.

“Respect, protect, love, and serve life, every human life!”

— St. John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, no.5

4. **Our Social Responsibility** – A just society protects the vulnerable; laws that deny the right to life undermine true freedom. "To claim the right to abortion, infanticide and euthanasia, and to recognize that right in law, means to attribute to human freedom a perverse and evil significance: that of an absolute power over others and against others. This is the death of true freedom."
5. **Openness to Life** – A society that welcomes life flourishes; one that rejects life falters. "Openness to life is at the center of true development. When a society moves towards the denial or suppression of life, it ends up no longer finding the necessary motivation and energy to strive for man's true good."
6. **Care for All the Vulnerable** – The Church emphasizes that the defense of the innocent unborn is intrinsically linked to the defense of every other human right and the dignity of all vulnerable individuals. This includes the poor, the destitute, the abandoned, the infirm, the elderly, and victims of human trafficking. It is not "progressive" to eliminate human life to solve problems.

Other Important Teachings:

- The Church rejects sterilization, surrogate motherhood, and technologies that treat children as products rather than gifts.
- Adoption is a beautiful and generous option that reflects God's love.
- A well-formed conscience must guide political and social choices, always prioritizing the defense of human life.

What Can I Do?

- **Pray** for the unborn, mothers in need, and all who suffer.
- **Learn** more about Catholic teaching on life issues.
- **Support** ministries that accompany women, children, and families.
- **Advocate** for laws and policies that defend human dignity.
- **Serve** by walking with those in crisis—be it pregnancy, poverty, illness, or isolation.

Take-Home Message:

Every Catholic is called to witness to the Gospel of Life. In our homes, parishes, workplaces, and public life, may we always be people who respect, protect, love, and serve every human life.

Reflection Question:

Where in your daily life do you see the dignity of human life being challenged — and how might you respond as a Catholic missionary disciple?

Church Teachings to Consult (*if you want to learn more*):

- [*Catechism of the Catholic Church*](#) (nos. 2270–2275)
- [*Gaudium et Spes*](#) (Second Vatican Council, 1965; no.27)
- [*Evangelium Vitae*](#) (St. John Paul II, 1995; nos.13, 20, 26, 54, 58-60)
- [*Caritas in Veritate*](#) (Pope Benedict XVI, 2009; nos.28, 75)
- [*Gaudete et Exsultate*](#) (Pope Francis, 2018; no.101)
- [*Amoris Laetitia*](#) (Pope Francis, 2016; nos. 42, 179)