Physician-assisted suicides deny the dignity of the human person: The gift of life

Is life not worth living if an individual is in a coma, has mental or physical handicaps, cannot live without constant pain, or needs significant assistance in daily life? Stephanie Packer answered the question, saying, “Though it is a struggle, so much joy and beauty is right in front of you if you are willing to open yourself up and see the possibilities.”

The position of the Catholic Church is clear: Life begins at conception and continues until natural death. Humans have physical bodies and spiritual souls, which are created in the image and likeness of God. As such, they have inherent worth, dignity and an unalienable right to life, even if their quality of life is not up to societal norms. Pope Francis has reminded us that: “Even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are the masterpieces of God’s creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect.”

When the quality of life is considered more important than life itself, when cost containment becomes a criterion for medical decisions, when euthanasia and assisted suicide become therapeutic options, life is no longer treated as a right endowed by the Creator. No person or government has the right to usurp a gift of God; no individual the right to throw it away.

Our Sunday Visitor, Lawrence P. Grayson is a visiting scholar in the School of Philosophy at The Catholic University of America.

The Catholic conscience: Learning to obey God in thought, word and deed

David Werning OSV Newsweekly August 20, 2017

In essence, conscience is that “sacred place” in the human soul where “God speaks to man [and woman]” (Veritatis Splendor, No. 58). Made in the image and likeness of God, which means having the gifts of reason and free will, the human person is able to receive the natural law and apply it to concrete actions. The conscience will make “a judgment either of acquittal or of condemnation, according as human acts are in conformity or not with the law of God written on the heart” (Veritatis Splendor, No. 59). Since the natural law directs the person to achieve the good in truth, the person who is listening to God’s voice conforms his or her life, and every choice, to God who is “the first truth and highest good” (Populorum Progressio, No. 10).

“The truth about moral good, as that truth is declared in the law of reason, is practically and concretely recognized by the judgment of conscience, which leads one to take responsibility for the good or the evil one has done. If man does evil, the just judgment of his conscience remains within him as a witness to the universal truth of the good, as well as to the malice of his particular choice. But the verdict of conscience remains in him also as a pledge of hope and mercy: while bearing witness to the evil he has done, it also reminds him of his need, with the help of God’s grace, to ask forgiveness, to do good and to cultivate virtue constantly.” Veritatis Splendor, No. 61
FROM THE DIRECTOR

During these challenging times in the Church and in society, we may find difficulty in continuing our ministries to defend human life. When the knocks keep coming from government, the Church itself, the media, people we love, etc, we may lose the energy to stand up for others.

Our strength to continue is challenged, but I want to remind you that you have good reason to carry on with your ministry. The ministries that are incorporated within the Consistent Life Ethic are all centered on one thing that never changes. These ministries are about God’s love for each and every person created. Even those of you who are working towards a better natural world do this as a benefit for every person living in whatever the circumstances.

When institutions run by humans fail to uphold human life, God is still championing for the people and God is working through us to do so. As Saint Therese of Avila, Doctor of the Church, said:

- Christ has no body but yours,
- No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
- Yours are the eyes with which he looks
  Compassion on this world,
- Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
- Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
- Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
- Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
- Christ has no body now but yours,
- No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
- Yours are the eyes with which he looks
  compassion on this world.
- Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

When bad news and difficult circumstances break our heart and break our will to continue, go to God in prayer. Ask for help. Ask for the love and support you need to continue in your ministry to love. We need love to give love and God is always our Great Lover who never fails us.

Peggy Gerovac

FDA OKs fertility app

The Food and Drug administration (FDA) has approved the “Natural Cycles” app for use in the United States. The app was developed by Swedish husband and wife team Elina Berglund and Raoul Scherwizl. The couple created the app to “go beyond contraception” and to allow women to “get to know” their bodies and their “unique cycles.” Berglund further stated the app “use[s] scientific research to empower women with knowledge about their body, and to replace medication with technology.” The app claims a lower unintended pregnancy rate than the pill—6.5 percent versus 9 percent for the pill, and 18 percent for condoms—all without the side effects of hormonal contraception.

Dr. Terri Cornelison of the FDA’s Center for Devices and Radiological Health stated, “Consumers are increasingly using digital health technologies to inform their everyday health decisions, and this new app can provide an effective method of contraception if it’s used carefully and correctly.”

National Catholic Bioethics Center
The meanings of **Integral Ecology** for Human Behavior

*From Laudato Si! On Care for Our Common Home*

“Integral Ecology,” challenges all people to broaden their focus of concern and their daily behavior to include standard environmental ecology, but also:

- Protection of all human life
- Concrete acts of solidarity with the poor
- The common good extending to future generations
- The value of human labor
- Serene harmony with nature
- Simply daily gestures which break with the logic of violence and exploitation and selfishness

- Ethical conduct in economic affairs
- Greater attention to urban planning to facilitate social relationships and give all people some contact with nature
- Protection of people’s cultural heritage in an era when media saturation tends to erase distinctions
- A contemplative outlook, one that reflects deeply on ecological decisions

Taken from [www.pastoralplanning.com](http://www.pastoralplanning.com)

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**Did you know the USCCB has an Office for Religious Liberty?**

“[Religious] freedom remains one of America's most precious possessions. And, as my brothers, the United States Bishops, have reminded us, all are called to be vigilant, precisely as good citizens, to preserve and defend that freedom from everything that would threaten or compromise it.”

*Pope Francis*

- Find the Latest News on our homepage
- Learn more—Religious Liberty at Home
- Learn more—International Religious Freedom
- Watch current videos on Religious Liberty
- Find Action Alerts to support
- Pray for Religious Liberty at home and abroad
- Subscribe to the monthly e-newsletter, **Free to Serve**

You can also read blogs and podcasts:

- **First Freedom Podcast**—Conversations about a variety of issues related to religious liberty, including challenges to our first freedom, Catholic social teaching, and more!
- **God’s Servant First Blog**
What Is Human Trafficking?

It is today's practice of slavery. It subjects children and adults; women and men; and US citizens and foreign-born persons to involuntary servitude for purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.

Does It Happen Here?

Yes. Human trafficking is a crime that's happening around the world AND right here in Northeast Ohio.

Who Is Trafficked?

There is no one face to human trafficking. Those most at risk are children, teens, homeless and missing youth, and vulnerable individuals such as immigrants, foster children, those who are addicted, and those who have been previously abused.

Why Don't They Leave?

Victims often don't realize they are victims. They don't self-identify due to shame, fear, not understanding that what is being done to them is a crime. They are concerned that they will be seen as criminals.

Who Are the Traffickers?

Almost Anyone. Traffickers prey on vulnerable individuals for financial gain. They use whatever means necessary to obtain and maintain control of their victims. They use psychological coercion, physical force, threats, lies and drugs to control their victims.

Greater Cleveland’s Coordinated Response to Human Trafficking is a multi-disciplinary group of agencies and organizations that have come together to collaboratively address the complexities of this crime and to weave a safety net for those victimized by the crime.

Don’t Make Us Pay for Purchase of Aborted Fetal Organs

Last month, news reports revealed that the Food and Drug Administration signed a new contract to acquire "fresh" aborted fetal organs for research creating so-called "humanized mice" with human immune systems.

The U.S. Bishops' Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities joined 44 other pro-life groups in signing a letter to Secretary Alex Azar, head of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, expressing shock and dismay that the FDA is "using federal tax dollars and fostering demand for human body parts taken from babies who are aborted."

The letter poses a number of questions to the Secretary about the contract with ABR and about other fetal tissue research being conducted by the National Institutes of Health.

Please add your voice to ours by sending a message to Sec. Azar and urging him to end all federal government association with those who participate in trafficking or procurement of aborted baby organs and to stop using taxpayer dollars for this gruesome practice.

To send a message, go to this website—
https://www.votervoice.net/USCCB/Campaigns/60930/Respond

“INADMISSIBLE”: THE CHURCH’S CALL FOR AN END TO THE DEATH PENALTY

On August 2, 2018, Pope Francis made a historic revision to the Catechism of the Catholic Church which declared the death penalty "inadmissible" in all cases.

In response to that call, people of faith are adding their names to the National Catholic Pledge to End the Death Penalty, and working to build a culture of life.

Check out the Catholic Mobilizing Network website to take the Pledge.
Life Issues Forum: When a Friend is Considering Abortion

July 13, 2018

If someone shared with you that she was pregnant and hadn't ruled out having an abortion, would you know how to respond? Although the first instinct may be to convince her that abortion ends a baby's life, hearing facts is not the first thing she needs. Research shows that many women in a pregnancy crisis think, "This is the end of my life as I know it." To face the challenges before her, your friend needs to know you care about her for her own sake and she is not alone.

First listening to your friend will help build trust and facilitate openness. Eventually, when she knows you truly care about her and she trusts you, you can share the truth in love. You can share facts about abortion, her own intrinsic worth, and the practical help and support available so she can choose life for herself and her baby.

Consider the four steps of the L.O.V.E. Approach™: Listen and Learn, Open Options, Vision and Value, and Extend and Empower.

L Listen and Learn
First, prioritize listening over speaking. You don't have to worry about whether you may say something "wrong," and you don't need to have all the answers. Start by listening to her story.

Ask her about her feelings, thoughts, values, beliefs, and wants. Do not interrupt, except to ask her to expound, when appropriate. Ask open-ended questions, and confirm what you think you are hearing.

O Open Options
When her story is fully shared, it is your turn to provide factual information, always in a loving and caring way. You might share about the reality of abortion and the wounds that typically result. As they relate to her life, you might share experiences about having a baby, adoption, and marriage. It's most helpful to keep the focus on her.

V Vision and Value
Awaken a vision in her for a healthier life (a vision she may never have had, or that may have dimmed). Help her value herself differently. She is a special creation, worthy of love. Reassure her there is always hope and she is not alone. She can make positive, life-giving choices. She can do it.

E Extend and Empower
Provide practical help and support. Her local pregnancy help center (heartbeatinternational.org/worldwide-directory) can offer consultation, lists of community resources, and ultrasound services. Consider keeping such lists of resources in your car, purse, or wallet. Help her plan next steps.

The L.O.V.E. Approach™ is a way to bring Christ's love at a crucial life-saving and life-defining moment. We are created to walk with and support one another. May we not hesitate to reach out in love.

This issue of Life Issues Forum has been adapted and shortened from the 2017-2018 USCCB Respect Life Program brochure by the same name: www.usccb.org/l-o-v-e.

*The L.O.V.E. Approach™ is trademarked by Heartbeat International, Inc. and may not be adapted or modified. The L.O.V.E. Approach™ is used in "What to Do When a Friend Is Considering Abortion" with permission from Heartbeat International, Inc.
Local Respect Life Month Events

Speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable. - Proverbs 31:8

EAST SIDE WEEK OF MASS & ROSARY

**October 1**—Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Wickliffe
7PM Mass, Rosary following

**October 2**—St. John Vianney, Mentor
8AM Mass, Rosary following

**October 3**—Ss. Robert & William, Euclid
Rosary before noon Mass

**October 4**—St. Justin Martyr, Eastlake
7PM Mass, Rosary following

**October 5**—Immaculate Conception, Willoughby
7PM Mass, Rosary following

MASS & ROSARY FOR LIFE

St. Andrew’s Abbey
2900 Martin Luther King Dr.

**Saturday, October 6th**
8:30am Confession
9:15am Mass for the Unborn
Other Saturdays we will assemble in front of Preterm at 9:30am

ROSARY COAST TO COAST

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church (corner of West 15th Street and Lexington Avenue)
Lorain, Ohio

**Sunday, October 7th**—4pm
The Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary
The initiative seeks to draw Catholics together through the powerful intercession of our Lady of the Rosary to pray for America to return to God and for our communities, our families, marriage, and life.
Please join us to say the rosary by the Mary statue and garden behind the rectory.

In case of weather, the event will be in the church.

It will take place simultaneously across all U.S. time zones.
Parking in 14th Street lot, adjacent to the church.
Call Chris at 440-282-6027 for more information.

LAKE COUNTY’s 25th ANNUAL LIFE CHAIN

Intersection of Mentor Ave (Rt20) and Reynolds (Rt. 306)

**Sunday, October 7th, 1:30-2:30pm**
Park on edges of Points East Shopping Center and join us at the intersection to stand & silently hold signs reminding the community of the truth that abortion kills children.

ST. BARNABAS LIFE CHAIN

9451 Brandywine Rd, Northfield, OH 44067

**Sunday, October 7th after the Noon Mass**
On the grounds of the church
This annual Prayer & Witness will last one hour—All are invited!

SACRED HEART OF JESUS—LIFE CHAIN

1545 S. Green Rd, South Euclid, OH 44121

**Sunday, October 7th 1-2pm**
Join the Respect Life Committee, parishioners and members of the community to stand and give silent witness to pray for our nation and an end to abortion.
We will hold signs for one hour at the intersection of Mayfield and South Green Roads.
Gather at the Lyceum patio (adjacent to the parking lot -NW) at 12:40pm for a prayer, instruction and distribution of signs. (Those unable to stand, please bring a chair.).
Questions: call Barbara Latini at 216-382-1910

“RESPECT LIFE” MASS & ALL-NIGHT ADORATION

St. Mary’s Church, 250 Kraft Street, Berea

**Friday, October 19th, 7pm Mass**
Pray with us at any time during the night!
Hourly devotions all night.
Light refreshments in vestibule.
Benediction: **8am, Saturday October 20th**
Call Vicky: 440-823-5141

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION ST. LADISLAS CHURCH

2345 Bassett Road, Westlake

**Sunday, October 21st**
Eucharistic Adoration from 12:15pm to 2pm
Please join us in prayer to bring an end to abortion, an increased awareness to all life issues and your intentions.
In Vitro Fertilization

**Question**: I know the Church teaches that in vitro fertilization is wrong, but my friends are so desperate for a child. What does it really matter?

**Answer**: In the Catholic view, God designed the world with order and purpose. We are creatures who always are battling the urge of Adam and Eve that has tainted humanity: to appropriate God’s role in creation.

Theologically speaking, the Church always will choose first to support what is found in nature. Secondarily, the Church will support scientific advancements so long as they support what is already found in nature.

Nature gives the plainest evidence of God’s plan for the universe. According to it, then, children only come about in one way — not grown on trees or in gardens, but through sexual procreation of a male and a female. Male and female are designed to come together — as biology and anatomy attest — in the sexual act. Furthermore, the unity that the sexual act expresses is indicative of the unity of the male and female brought about in their marriage. The two become united in marriage, so much so through their bodily unity they open themselves to their co-creative power to produce a new body — truly a “one-flesh” union.

The Church understands that children are meant to be raised in a family — with a mother and a father. We find that in nature, and we learn more about that in divine revelation. In fact, children are a product of marriage, and there is no other reason they should come about.

Of course children do naturally come about in other situations, however, and many of these are far from ideal. They could include a man and a woman afraid to commit to each other in marriage, or it could be through the worst situations possible, such as rape or incest. This does not diminish the dignity of the person who was brought into existence under such situations. The trump card in these unfortunate scenarios is, of course, that all human life is sacred and has infinite value because it is crafted after the image and likeness of God.

Because children are designed by God to be the fruit of a one-flesh union of male and female, the Church opposes any other form of procreation. This would include means not yet attainable, such as human cloning, or means in popular use today, such as in vitro fertilization.

In vitro disrupts the order that God intended for his creation. In vitro also uses science to bring about new life outside of the womb when it joins egg and sperm in a petri dish to create embryos. Often, some of these embryos then are implanted within the womb while others are discarded. Because the Church believes life begins at conception, when embryos are discarded, so is human life, which obviously is immoral.

So is the Church telling couples who may be struggling with infertility that they can’t have children? Absolutely not. The Church recognizes that there are infertile couples who desire to live their vocation as family with children in their home. At the same time, the Church recognizes that there are many children in the world who are unwanted and not afforded those rights due them. Adoption is the recommended path in situations like this. And adoption is a very biblical concept, rich in meaning and no less rich in love. There is also spiritual parenthood, which is no less important and real.

It is important to note that the Church is not opposed to innovative methods to promote fertility — such as NaPro Technology — so long as conception occurs naturally. [Diocese of Cleveland, Marriage and Family Office, Natural Family Planning]

The bottom line is that, similar to the sacraments, children are a gift, not a right. The product of a one-flesh union of a male and female, children are not commodities. They aren’t pets. They have immortal souls, are of infinite dignity made in God’s image and are to be provided for as such.
Silent Sorrow
Mass for those who have suffered
Miscarriage, Infertility,
& Neo-Natal Death

...it is not the will of your heavenly Father
that one of these little ones be lost.

All Are Welcome

Sunday, October 7, 2018, 5:30 p.m.

Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist

Cleveland, Ohio

Bishop Nelson J. Perez, D.D., celebrant

Catholic Diocese of Cleveland
FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

Tell Congress Women Don't Lie About Post Abortion Trauma

Thousands of women experience symptoms of trauma and even post-traumatic stress disorder after abortion - either immediately after or sometimes decades later. Yet abortion supporters, including abortion supporters in Congress, refuse to acknowledge the real-life experience of these women.

Whether your Member of Congress and Senators support life, or do not, they ought to hear from you.

Contact your Senators and Member of Congress today. We are so grateful for your support and action.

Message:

Abortion is often portrayed as essential for women to achieve freedom and equality with men, yet many report feeling tremendous pressure or even face threats to abort - often from the father of the child.

Abortion supporters staunchly deny post abortion trauma exists or blame it all on people seeking to reduce abortion. This position cruelly denies the lived experience of women who speak of feelings of guilt, shame, grief, and regret and experience substance abuse, depression, and suicidal or self-harm inclinations after having an abortion.

For example, Cynthia Carney in an amicus brief submitted to the Supreme Court described the aftermath of her abortion saying, “For 23 years, I went into crying spells, depression, suicidal thoughts. Emotionally it devastated me.” Camelia Murphy explained, “I have suffered with low self-esteem, self-hatred, suicidal impulses, constant anxiety especially about sex and about making decisions.”

Women would be better served if society recognized their grief from the death of their child, tried to creatively answer the needs of single mothers, mothers trying to get through school, mothers needing higher or more stable finances, etc. rather than dismissing their psychological trauma and telling them that abortion is the best choice. We can and should do better for all women.

Thank you for allowing me to express my views on this important issue.

Take action here:

September 26 through November 4, 2018

Unite with hundreds of other cities around the world for the largest and longest coordinated pro-life mobilization in history: the 40 Days for Life campaign. Recognizing that “with God all things are possible,” people of faith are praying that this effort will help bring an end to the tragedy of abortion.

40 Days for Life has achieved proven results:

- 765,000 people mobilized worldwide
- 177 converted abortion workers
- 14,643 lives saved from abortion
- 96 abortion facilities closed

40 Days for Life is made up of three components:

**PRAYER & FASTING:**
believers throughout our city are invited to join together for 40 days of fervent prayer and fasting for an end to abortion

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH:**
help take a positive, upbeat pro-life message to every corner of our city through media efforts, advocacy, and public visibility

**PEACEFUL VIGIL:**
stand for life during a 40-day peaceful public witness at the vigil sites listed below...

- Preterm – Cleveland
  12000 Shaker Blvd
  Peggy 216-382-9170

- Planned Parenthood
  25360 Rockside Road
  John 216-641-6557

- Family Planning – Painesville
  54 South State Street
  Renee 440-620-3493

Learn how you can speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves by visiting:

www.40daysforlife.com/cleveland

John, Campaign Director 216-245-9744
Guest Speaker is “Trapper Jack”
Award-winning Cleveland broadcaster
25 years on morning radio

LifeWorks Ohio is a registered 501 (c)3 non-profit, non-partisan organization devoted entirely to education which affirms the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death.

Doors open at 6:15pm for music, raffle baskets, silent auction, cash bar, gourmet dinner.

Call 216-661-6616 for reservations
$65/person, $500/table of 8 persons
If Lifeworks receives your reservation by October 13th, you will receive 5 free basket raffle tickets

Guidelines for the Standard POLST Form
(National Catholic Bioethics Center)

If you are thinking about completing a standard Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) form or have been asked by a health care provider to complete one, please keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. The POLST form is appropriate only for and should be completed only by patients who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness, defined as when death is anticipated within six months.

2. Completing a POLST form is OPTIONAL. Patients or surrogates are under no obligation to complete the form, and health care providers cannot compel a patient or surrogate to complete a POLST as a condition for receiving treatment.

3. A patient or surrogate must sign the POLST form for it to be valid. This signature affirms that what is indicated on the form accurately communicates the patient’s treatment preferences.

4. Physicians are under no obligation to complete a POLST form for their patients, and no physician can be forced to sign a patient’s POLST contrary to his or her medical judgment or rightly formed conscience.

5. Patients and surrogates can use a POLST form to indicate that the most comprehensive treatment shall be provided or that all indicated forms of life support shall be used to conserve life.

6. Patients and surrogates can alter or revoke a POLST form at any time to meet changing medical conditions and treatment preferences.
US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking is hosting a Western Hemispheric Conference of the HT networks associated with Talitha Kum (Talitha Kum is an international network of Consecrated Life against trafficking in persons. Working as a network facilitates collaboration and the interchange of information between consecrated men and women in 70 countries) in **Cleveland, October 24-27, 2018 at the Jesuit Retreat Center**. Representatives are expected from Canada, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, Brazil, and other South American countries. The purpose of the gathering is to build bridges among the networks, share successes and challenges, and determine ways to support one another in this work.

**PLEASE CONTACT US TO POST YOUR VOLUNTEER NEEDS AND UPCOMING EVENTS. ALL OF OUR ADS CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE FOR PARISH USE!**

**Contact Us**

*For Life* is a quarterly publication and educational service of the Office for Human Life of the Diocese of Cleveland.

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- Posts on diocesan, local, national, and international items of interest
- Action alerts

*This is the fastest way to get breaking news and share it with others.*

**May a change in the U.S. Supreme Court move our nation closer to the day when every human being is protected in law and welcomed in life.**

**Come back to God WHO is love and MERCY**

Please call 216-334-2966

If you would like to receive more periodic emails & the digital version of ‘For Life’...

Please send your e-mail address to:

pmgerovac@ccdocle.org