



Office for Human Life-Catholic Charities Diocese of Cleveland

Eucharist Is

“God’s Absolute ‘No’ to Violence”

From a Lenten Sermon by Father Cantalamessa
MARCH 11, 2005

It is “emblematic that over his death there were gathered ‘Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel’; those who were enemies before became friends, exactly as in every crisis of the scapegoat,” he said, citing Acts 4:27.

“Christ defeated violence, not by opposing it with greater violence, but suffering it and laying bare its injustice and uselessness,” the preacher said. “He inaugurated a new kind of victory that St. Augustine condenses in three words: ‘victor quia victima’: victor because he is victim.”

And “resurrecting him from the dead, the Father declared, once and for all, on what side truth and justice are, and on what side error and lies,” stated the Pontifical Household preacher.

The “novelty of Christ’s sacrifice is made relevant from different points of view in Hebrews: ‘He has no need, as did the high priests, to offer sacrifice day after day’; ‘he would have had to suffer repeatedly from the foundation of the world. But now once for all he has appeared at the end of the ages to take away sin by his sacrifice.’”

Referring to texts on Christ’s sacrifice and the redemption, Father Cantalamessa said that “the

events and experiences of the 20th century, never before lived in such proportions by humanity, posed new to questions to Scripture, and Scripture, as always, revealed itself capable of answers to the measure of the questions.”

“The abolition of the death penalty also received a new light from the analysis on violence and the sacred. Something of the mechanism of the scapegoat is under way in every capital execution, including in those endorsed by the law,” he said.

“‘One died for all.’ The believer has another reason — Eucharistic — to oppose the death penalty. How can Christians, in certain countries, approve and rejoice over the news that a criminal has been condemned to death, when we read in the Bible: ‘Do I indeed derive any pleasure from the death of the wicked? says the Lord God. Do I not rather rejoice when he turns from his evil way that he may live?’” asked Father Cantalamessa.

In the preacher’s opinion, “the modern debate on violence and the sacred thus helps us to accept a new dimension of the Eucharist,” thanks to which “God’s absolute ‘no’ to violence, pronounced on the cross, is kept alive through the centuries. The Eucharist is the sacrament of non-violence!”

www.zenit.org

“Abortion has always been built on a lie. Today, the lie is switching from “abortion is a choice” to “abortion is healthcare.”

Archbishop Naumann

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Last week I was in a meeting with an outside company who is working on a new website for Catholic Charities. My colleagues and I met with them to give overviews to the ministries we lead. My colleagues described their need for disseminating and collecting information related to the programs they offer in their offices. When it was my turn to describe the what, why and how of the Office for Human Life, I felt the need to describe the overall posture of the office and how it differs from these other ministries.

The basic difference I wanted to communicate from the very beginning is that this office is primarily focused on consultation with parishes and other Catholic institutions in the diocese. Did you know that? You may have never been told this or realized this. Consultation is how I am able to work with so many parishes as an office of one person. I am here to assist pastors, parish staff, volunteers etc. to lead ministry related to the dignity of human life in their own space.

This happens when I disseminate information via this publication, email, letters, and/or social media. I am constantly attempting to provide information, inspiration and “how to” ideas. I use many means to reach more people and to give you choices.

I also spend a good amount of time responding to phone calls and emails. I answer questions and try to provide guidance. Some of you are more regular than others. Maybe this will be an invitation to reach me for help.

Here is how one consultation worked well recently. A parish staff member called me about an event they were planning with neighboring parishes. She was looking for help with getting the word out to a broader audience. I said I could put it out on social media, but I wouldn't be able to do more with such short notice. I asked if she would like some bro-

chures to be available for participants. She thought that would be great. I then suggested some things to be aware of when you do an event with life issues that can sometimes trigger emotions. The staff person called again after the event and indicated the participants wanted a follow-up. She thought it was a good idea and invited me to lead a discussion. I look forward to visiting this parish in a couple of days. I pray I can add to their experience and their love for God's people.

So give me a call. Send me an email. Tell me what's going on. Maybe I can help.

Peggy Gerovac

Prayer Corner

Peace Within

May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be confident knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.

It is there for each and every one of us.

www.jesuitresource.org

Keeping Families Together

The border situation involving migrants – mostly from Central America – seeking asylum in the United States reached crisis proportions during the summer of 2018 when the administration announced a policy of detaining and separating all adults who crossed the border with their children.

After more than a month had passed and over 1,400 families had been separated, federal courts and broader public opinion intervened to call for an end of the practice. When the policy officially ended on June 20, 2018, the reunification of parents and their children began in earnest with Catholic Charities agencies serving as family reunification sites and locations for assisting migrants with their short and long term needs.

Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) and its member agencies have been involved in the process of helping migrants and unaccompanied minors (not to mention refugees) since its founding over a century ago.

Lucas Swanepoel, vice president of social policy for CCUSA, said that the institutional perspective of Catholic Charities highlights a couple of important principles to keep in mind when working with migrants.

“The first thing we have to do is help solve the problems in the home countries,” Swanepoel said. “Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that migrants should have not only the right to migrate when necessary but also the right not to migrate. By investing in economic development and providing greater security for families in their home country, we can give families the option to stay in the communities they have known for centuries. However, until progress is made we have a responsibility to provide a humane and dignified response to families fleeing their countries in need of opportunity and safety. While our programs and our laws can be strengthened to protect families and abuses in the immigration system, we must never lose sight of the reality that for many migrants they are doing the thing that comes most natural to any mom and dad: keeping their children safe.”

CCUSA Spring 2019

New HHS Rule defunds Planned Parenthood

On February 22nd, the Department of Health and Human Services announced a new final rule regarding Title X, the federal program that subsidizes preventive care and family planning services for low income families. Most importantly, the new “Protect Life Rule” requires both physical and financial separation between recipients of Title X funds and facilities that perform abortions. In other words, Planned Parenthood (and other) centers where abortions are performed are now ineligible for Title X funding, a loss estimated at \$60 million per year. The new final rule also prohibits Title X funds to be used to “perform, promote, refer for, or support abortion as a method of family planning” and it ensures conscience protection by eliminating the requirement that Title X providers counsel and refer for abortion. Finally, the new rule requires that Title X recipients act in accord with state reporting laws concerning sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, incest, and human trafficking. Following the announcement of the new rule, Washington state Attorney General Bob Ferguson indicated that he will sue the Trump Administration to prevent its enforcement.

NCBC Bioethics Public Policy Report, March 1, 2019

Human Trafficking: Not All Black or White

The link between domestic sex trafficking and racial discrimination—while undeniable, is not immediately clear. What is clear; however, is that the demography of domestic sex trafficking is very different from the racial make up of the United States. In a recent report by the Office of Victims of Crime, of the confirmed sex trafficking victims, 40.4 percent of victims were African-American. This is almost four times higher than the percentage of African-Americans living in the United States, which the US Census Bureau currently lists as 13.1 percent of the total population. The FBI claims an even more surprising statistic for arrests under the age of 18, black children make up 55 % of all prostitution-related arrests in the U.S.

White / Caucasian women and girls represent the second highest number of sex trafficking victims as 25.6 percent. This number is drastically lower than the current amount of White / Caucasian people in the United States, which as the majority ethnic group, makes up 75.1 percent of the country's total population. According to the report by the Office of Victims of Crime, women and girls who are African-American or White / Caucasian are more likely to become victims of sex trafficking than any other ethnic group in the United States. But why are African-American victims overrepresented and White / Caucasian victims underrepresented in sex trafficking?

Some argue that it is simple economics that causes racial disparities in trafficking—the demand for one race is higher than the demand for another. That could possibly explain why the percent of Asian American sex trafficking victims matches within one percent the racial makeup in the United States (four and five percent respectfully). Many traffickers are also savvy businessmen who are just trying to keep people that were marketable. In a recent Urban Institute study that looked at the economics of human trafficking, of the traffickers interviewed, the majority over-

whelming believed that trafficking white women would make them more money but trafficking black women would land them less jail time if caught. Most of the traffickers interviewed had trafficked women and girls of different races since having a variety of products to sell was good for business.

There has never been a demographic survey of sex trafficking victims in the United States, so what little information we have is based off of non-profit reports and small government studies. Since most of the reports trying to link race and sex trafficking are taken from a small sample of the population, the results seem to leave more questions than answers. Without a comprehensive survey of victims of domestic sex trafficking, the gross racial disparity of sex trafficking victims will remain unknown—or worse or ignored.

<http://humantraffickingsearch.org/human-trafficking-not-all-black-or-white/>

Posted by Michelle Lillie | 2014



Salt and Light

Surrogate motherhood

Surrogate motherhood is when a woman carries in pregnancy an embryo implanted in her uterus who is genetically a stranger because it has been obtained through the union of the gametes of “donors.” She carries the pregnancy with a pledge to surrender the baby once it is born to the party who commissioned or made the agreement for the pregnancy. Sometimes the woman carries in pregnancy an embryo to whose procreation she has contributed the donation of her own ovum, fertilized through insemination with the sperm of a man other than her husband.

In both cases the Church opposes surrogate motherhood. God has set forth both in nature and in his revealed word that a child be conceived by his own parents in the love of the marital embrace and be born from and raised by those parents. Surrogate motherhood separates what God has joined together in several ways.

Usually it begins with in vitro fertilization (IVF), wherein the sperm and numerous ova are united in a petri dish. Thus conception is separated from the marital act, which God has joined together. In IVF one embryo is usually chosen, and the rest are frozen or discarded. Discarding them violates the fifth commandment by killing human beings. Freezing them is a violation of human dignity. IVF turns the conception of human life into a technology instead of a celebration of the unity of the couple.

Surrogate motherhood further violates marriage and the dignity of persons by introducing a third party into the process. This too separates what God has joined. A child is to be conceived in his own mother and carried in her womb.

Finally, there is a tendency in our culture to call parenthood a right. It is not. It should depend on God. There are going to be times when God permits that a couple not be able to conceive children. Perhaps he wants them to adopt or has reasons that they not have children. But God is the Lord of life and has determined how human life should come about. We should learn to respect God’s authority in these matters and not seek to override him.

February 3-9, 2019 osv.com

“God has seen how certain people have behaved like Herod killing the innocents – how hatred invades the hearts of men, how egoism, thirst for power, money and material goods lead some to kill and steal.”

Auxillary Bishop Silvia Jose Baez of Managua, Nicaragua

A Christ-Centered Universe

There is more to an ecological spirituality than this, for we know that in the beginning all things were created through Christ. In Christ, all the eons of time have brought humankind to life on the earth. As the Son chose to remain with humanity in the Spirit, we must say that all the eons of time are now bringing to life on earth the mystical Body of Christ, who is our Head.

Ecological spirituality requires that we keep in focus that the second person of the Trinity has come and remains with humanity through the Church. What we do to our human flesh, then, we are somehow doing to the Christ, and what we do to our environment, our earthly home, we are doing to our flesh. For even this earth, in whose atmosphere we are punching holes and whose depths we are poisoning with wastes, also groans awaiting its redemption. For all things are to be made new in Christ, in whom we live and move and have our being.

We must think of humankind as the self-aware and reflective part of the universe. We are the universe's self-revelation of what life all tends toward (some scientists call this the universal anthropic principle). In a certain sense, humankind is the last species on the earth evolving according to its own inner dynamic. We have touched every other creature's evolution, at least in some way. Some we have obliterated, many we can still discover. Notice that human understanding and human desiring give shape to the fate of the earth. Ecological spirituality elicits this awareness in us: God in eternity passionately desired intelligent freedom to adorn the earth. We are that adornment. God in eternity has hopes for the earth: that it flourish and grow steadier and more beautiful. We are that plan. Can we have any deeper reason for caring for our planet and for every single person on it?

An Ecological Spirituality by Reverend Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ (www.usccb.org)

Whose Right to Die?

Ezekiel J. Emanuel, cancer specialist and Obama healthcare advisor
The Atlantic, March, 1997

Broad legalization of physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia would have the paradoxical effect of making patients seem to be responsible for their own suffering. Rather than being seen primarily as the victims of pain and suffering caused by disease, patients would be seen as having the power to end their suffering by agreeing to an injection or taking some pills; refusing would mean that living through the pain was the patient's decision, the patient's responsibility. Placing the blame on the patient would reduce the motivation of caregivers to provide the extra care that might be required, and would ease [their] guilt if the care fell short.

<https://www.reviewjournal.com/opinion/commentary-candy-coating-physician-assisted-killing-1593960/>

Prayer for an End to Infanticide

The U.S. Senate recently failed to pass the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act—legislation that prohibits infanticide by ensuring that a child born alive following an attempted abortion would receive the same degree of care to preserve her or his life and health as would be given to any other child born alive at the same gestational age. Please join us in prayer for an end to infanticide:

“Jesus, Lord of Life, transform the hearts of our elected leaders to recognize that infanticide is wrong and must not be tolerated. Open senators’ hearts and minds to recognize and defend the precious gift of every human life.”

AND

“Jesus, Lord of Life, transform the hearts of all elected leaders to recognize that infanticide is wrong and must not be tolerated. Open hearts and minds to recognize and defend the precious gift of every human life.”

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



Automated Weapons Systems

A Vatican representative at the United Nations in November expressed concern about fully automated and autonomous lethal weapons systems, Catholic News Service reports.

Archbishop Ivan Jurkovic, Vatican observer to UN agencies in Geneva, told a group of experts that lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) must be banned, as their development provides “the capacity of altering irreversibly the nature of warfare, becoming more detached from human agency, putting in question the humanity of our societies.”

“In order to prevent an arms race and the increase of inequalities and instability, it is an imperative duty to act promptly: Now is the time to prevent LAWS from becoming the reality of tomorrow’s warfare,” he said.

Signs of the Times, Our Sunday visitor, February 3-9, 2019

When we stand before Jesus crucified, we see the depth of his love, which exalts and sustains us, but at the same time, unless we are blind, we begin to realize that Jesus’ gaze, burning with love, expands to embrace all his people. We realize once more that he wants to make use of us to draw closer to his beloved people. He takes us from the midst of his people and he sends us to his people; without this sense of belonging we cannot understand our deepest identity.

The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)

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