



## **CATHOLIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR OUR EARTHLY PASSING**

We know earthly death is not the end, but rather the door through which we must pass to gain eternal life. Because of our belief and hope in the Resurrection, we can face death not with fear, but with preparation. Although certainly not comprehensive, the following considerations are provided as starting points for understanding and preparing for this transition, whether it is imminent or not.

### **Now and at the Hour of our Death**

We prepare for eternal life by choosing to love and follow God now, in our daily lives and decisions. For example, through prayer and regular reception of the sacraments, especially Confession and the Eucharist, we obtain grace to live in ever-deeper communion with God and with one another in lives of faith, charity, and justice.[2] We ask for Our Blessed Mother's help now, and we entrust ourselves to her further as we "surrender 'the hour of our death' wholly to her care." [3]

Our journey with Christ naturally includes equipping our consciences to make morally good judgments and acting accordingly.[4] Learning about the dignity of human life and the indispensable respect for it, as well as applicable principles for medical care, is particularly important in preparing for our eventual passing.

Some bishops offer guides applying moral principles to local legal options.[6] Parish and online resources are also widely available for careful and prayerful study, and the Ethical and Religious Directives from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops give direction for health care services to

those who are seriously ill or dying.[7]

### **A Note on General Principles**

No summary can substitute for thorough catechesis, but some general principles are clear. We are entrusted by God with the gift of life, and in response, we care for our lives and health in obedience and gratitude to our Creator.

This obliges us to make use of appropriate, effective medical care. However, even effective treatments may at times impose such a great burden that we, in good conscience, may forgo or discontinue them. This applies even to life-sustaining treatments. Of course, nothing should be done or deliberately omitted to hasten death.[8]

The Church affirms the inviolable dignity of every person, regardless of the duration or extent of the person's incapacity or dependency. Nothing diminishes the unchangeable dignity and sanctity of a person's life, or the obligation to protect and care for it. In principle, assisted feeding and hydration should be provided unless it cannot sustain life or is unduly burdensome to the patient, or if death is imminent, whether it is provided or not.

Moreover, no one should choose suicide, nor counsel or assist another to take his or her own life.

This document including more on Discerning Treatment Options, Speaking with Loved Ones, Accompaniment before and after Death, Hope in the Resurrection is available as a brochure, a bulletin box, a bulletin insert or a full page document at <https://www.respectlife.org/end-of-life-considerations>.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



In a presentation to the U.S. bishops at their annual meeting in Baltimore, Archbishop Joseph Naumann announced an exciting, parish-based initiative focused on assisting pregnant mothers in need. As chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities, Archbishop Naumann invited all U.S. bishops to invite their parishes to join a nationwide effort from March 25, 2020 to March 25, 2021 entitled “Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service.”

For this Year of Service, the Committee on Pro-Life Activities is developing educational, pastoral, prayer, and action-oriented resources for parish use, such as the following:

- Tools for documenting an inventory of local resources for pregnant mothers in need
- Ideas for improving parish responses
- Prayers for building a culture of life and a civilization of love
- Reflections on the teachings of *Evangelium Vitae*, *Evangelii Gaudium*, and *Laudato Si*

These resources will include homily helps, suggested prayers, bulletin inserts, pulpit announcements, parish-based activities, and communications and outreach suggestions. All of these will be posted on our website (in English and Spanish) with a suggested timeline for the Year of Service. The resources are being developed so that they can easily be shared from bishops to pastors, along with suggestions for pastors on how to delegate efforts in this Year of Service to parish volunteers. The intention is ease of use at the parish level.

Early feedback from stakeholders tells us that a parish focus on help for pregnant and parenting moms in need can be a unifying message. It can initiate or improve upon the collaboration of those who work on social justice and pro-life efforts. It can also

move the conversation from what sometimes seems like a partisan divide into pastoral unity. This Year of Service is a response to Pope Francis’ repeated challenge to go to the margins and bring hope and help to those in need.

- WWMIN Year at a Glance
- The Action Guide Summary (a 3-page summary of the first 2 phases)
- The Parish Inventory Tool
- [www.walkingwithmoms.com/](http://www.walkingwithmoms.com/) (dedicated website with resources and updates throughout the year)

Peggy Gerovac will be assisting parishes with their implementation of this exciting new program, we’ve never done something like this before as a coordinated effort across the country. The “Year at a Glance” document is included as a resource in this issue of For Life.

### **Catholic medical institute shares successes in stem cell research**

Since 2006, the Iowa-based John Paul II Medical Research Institute has worked to provide alternatives to using embryonic stem cells by finding new techniques to create adult stem cells. In recent years, the institute has documented a number of successes, including differentiating adult stem cells into every type of human tissue, and it is currently developing two lines of adult stem cells from placenta and cord blood. Dr. Alan Moy, co-founder of the institute, said in an Oct 19 video that the lack of ethical alternatives to embryonic stem cell research “is going to create a moral and financial challenge for Catholic health care workers,” researchers, hospitals and patients.

*Our Sunday Visitor* December 8-14, 2019

### **Developing related story**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to publish a statement in early 2020 in the Federal Register that announces the intention to convene an NIH Human Fetal Tissue Research Ethics Advisory Board for fiscal year 2020.



*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:

**1,000,000**  
people mobilized  
worldwide

**196**  
converted  
abortion workers

**16,746**  
lives saved  
from abortion

**104**  
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  
[www.40daysforlife.com/cleveland](http://www.40daysforlife.com/cleveland)

Planned Parenthood  
25350 Rockside Road  
John 216-641-6587  
[www.40daysforlife.com/bedfordheights](http://www.40daysforlife.com/bedfordheights)

Family Planning –Painesville  
54 South State Street  
Carol 440-823-1204  
[www.40daysforlife.com/painesville](http://www.40daysforlife.com/painesville)



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

**[www.40daysforlife.com/cleveland](http://www.40daysforlife.com/cleveland)**

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John, Campaign Director 216-245-9744

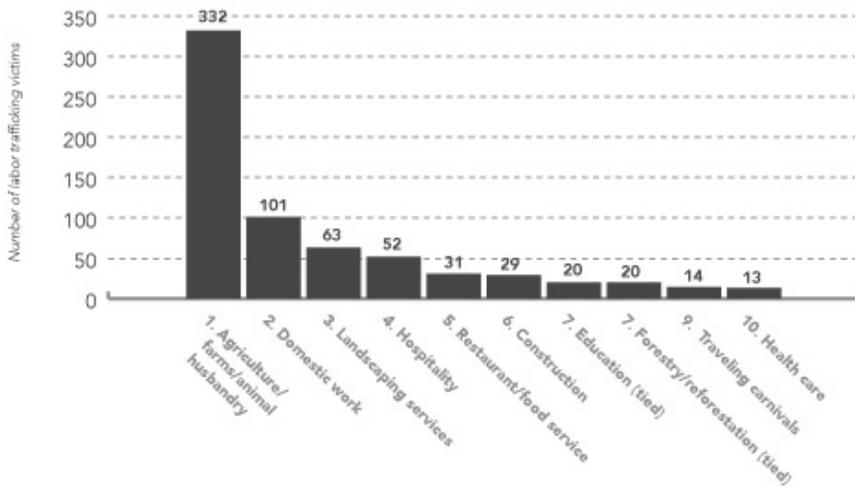
**Types and venues of trafficking**



Form of trafficking	Number of trafficking victims	Percent of trafficking victims (N =797)
● Labor	771	96.74%
● Sex	16	2.01%
● Sex and labor	7	0.88%
● Not specified	3	0.38%
Total number of trafficking victims	797	100%

While the agriculture industry had the highest number of victims, it is far from the only industry in which trafficking occurs.

*Top 10 industries of labor trafficking*



Polaris analyzed more than 32,000 cases of human trafficking between December 2007 and December 2016 through its operation of the National Human Trafficking Hotline and BeFree Textline—the largest data set on human trafficking in the US ever compiled and publicly analyzed. Polaris’s research team analyzed the data and developed a classification system that identifies 25 types of human trafficking in the US:

- |                                |                                    |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Recreational Facilities        | Personal Sexual Servitude          |
| Health Care                    | Agriculture & Animal Husbandry     |
| Forestry and Logging           | Peddling and Begging               |
| Carnivals                      | Restaurants and Food Service       |
| Remote Interactive Sexual Acts | Traveling Sales Crews              |
| Factories and Manufacturing    | Pornography                        |
| Commercial Cleaning Services   | Bars, Strip Clubs and Cantinas     |
| Arts and Entertainment         | Domestic Work                      |
| Illicit Activities             | Residential                        |
| Landscaping                    | Outdoor Solicitation               |
| Hotels and Hospitality         | Illicit Massage, Health and Beauty |
| Construction                   | Escort Services                    |
| Health and Beauty Services     |                                    |

**Death Penalty Information Center 2019 Year End Report: Death Penalty Erodes Further**

The death penalty has now disappeared from whole regions of the country and continues to erode in others, according to the Death Penalty Information Center’s 2019 Year End Report. With New Hampshire’s repeal of its capital punishment statute in May, 21 states have now abolished the death penalty, with nine having done so since 2004. In March, California Governor Gavin Newsom imposed a moratorium on executions on the nation’s largest death row, joining governors in Oregon, Colorado, and Pennsylvania in formally halting executions in their states. Half of U.S. states have now either abolished the death penalty or halted executions. Executions and new death sentences remained near historic lows for the fifth consecutive year. For the first time since Gallup began asking the question in 1985, a majority of respondents (60%) believe that life in prison without parole is a better approach for punishing murder than the death penalty.

You can read and download DPIC's 2019 Year End Report [here](#).

## #CivilizeIt2020!

A divided country. Fights at the dinner table. Political vitriol. What does it mean to love our neighbors in the midst of such a climate?

As Catholics, we have a long tradition of engagement in the political process as a means of putting our faith into action. We are called to bring the best of ourselves and our faith to the public square—and yet today, many shy away from such involvement because our national and local conversations are filled with vitriol and harsh language, often directed at people themselves.

When personal attacks replace honest debate, no one wins. This kind of attack, no matter the reason, only serves to further divide our communities. As Catholics, we must model a better way. We invite you to join the Civilize It campaign by taking the pledge below as a way to promote civility, love our neighbors, and build community.

Civilize It is about making room in your heart for those with whom you disagree. We are called to recognize that each one of us is a beloved child of God and to respond in love to that reality. Civilize It is a non-partisan call to focus on the dignity of all people, even when we disagree, and to put faith in action by bearing witness to a better way forward.

Take the pledge below as an individual, family, or community. Anyone and everyone can commit together to honoring human dignity through civil conversation.

### *I PLEDGE:*

1. **Civility:** To recognize the human dignity of those with whom I disagree, treat others with respect, and rise above attacks when directed at me.
2. **Clarity:** To root my political viewpoints in the Gospel and a well formed conscience, which involves prayer, conversation, study and listening. I will stand up for my convictions and speak out when I witness language that disparages others' dignity, while also listening and seeking to understand others' experiences.
3. **Compassion:** To encounter others with a tone and posture which affirms that I honor the dignity of others and invites others to do the same. I will presume others' best intentions and listen to their stories with empathy. I will strive to understand before seeking to be understood.

For more information and/or to make the pledge go to <https://www.wearesaltandlight.org/civilize-it>.

## Pursuit of integral ecology

The origin, transformative potential, and future development of an alliance between science, policy, and religion is based on recent advances at the Holy See, which houses two Pontifical Academies devoted to science: one for natural scientists and the other for social scientists. The members of these academies are chosen not for their religious affiliations but for their scientific preeminence. In May 2014, the two academies of scholars, philosophers, and theologians met to contemplate the sustainability of humanity and nature, and came to a remarkable (for a scientific body) conclusion: The resolution of major environmental problems facing society requires a fundamental reorientation in our behavior and attitude toward nature and toward each other. Both academies convened faith leaders of the major religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam (both Sunni and Shia), and Judaism to state that slavery and human trafficking are crimes against

*Continued on page 7*

## Cardinal Turkson: the impact of “Caritas in veritate” after ten years

(Vatican News)

Introduced first, as “natural ecology”, into the Church’s social teaching by St. Pope Paul VI (Populorum progressio), the concept of ecology was further applied to human life, as human ecology, and to the world of labour, as social ecology, in the magisterial teaching of St. Pope John Paul II. Pope Benedict XVI further deepened and broadened the application of the concept to the social life of the human family and to peace; wherefore one identifies now “an integral ecology” in the social teaching of the Church, as consisting of natural ecology, human ecology, social ecology and an ecology of peace. Pope Benedict XVI dedicated an entire chapter (4) to the issue of the environment and human existence: “The Development of Peoples, Rights and Duties, The Environment,” because “the way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa.”

There is, therefore, an inseparable relationship between human life and the natural environment which supports it as “that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God, from whom we come and towards whom we are journeying”. This bond between man and his world paved the way for the very famous teaching of Pope Benedict XVI that the Book of Nature is one and indivisible, and that it includes not only the environment, but also individuals, family and social ethics. As he goes on to teach, “our duties towards the environment flow from our duties towards the person. Thus, the “decisive issue” in the relationship between man and his world: between natural and human ecology, “is the moral tenor of society”. Wherefore the redemption of man implies the redemption of creation which groans (Rom 8:22-24).



**WE ALL BELONG BROCHURE**

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Key principles of the

*Guidelines to the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*

2017 Revised Edition

Order for your parish or dioceses!

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 **National Catholic Partnership on Disability**  
Alianza Nacional Católica sobre la Discapacidad

[NCPD.org/We-All-Belong](http://NCPD.org/We-All-Belong)

“The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom.”

**Isaac Asimov**

*Continued from page 5*

humanity. Although it is hard for different religions to pray at the same altar, it finally became possible and necessary for them to act together to defend the dignity of human beings and their common home. This new attitude spurred meetings in 2014 and 2015 between scientists, policy-makers, and religious leaders that included UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and governors and mayors from more than 80 large cities. The groups agreed that the mitigation of climate change was a moral and religious imperative, and that the development of a sustainable relationship with the planet also requires a moral revolution. This new alliance also declared that extreme globalization of forms of indifference such as human trafficking and modern slavery should be acknowledged as crimes against humanity.

*Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo. Veerabhadran Ramanathan, from Editorial Science 13 May 2016*

### **“God’s heart weeps,” Bishop Perez tells those attending Annual Mass for Life**

Bishop Nelson Perez was the main celebrant for the Annual Mass for Life at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. The Mass was held on Wednesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, the 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the decision of Roe v. Wade. One of the most controversial Supreme Court decisions of our time, the case legalized abortion through the entire 9 months of pregnancy.

Attended by long-time pro-life supporters and students and staff from many of the local Catholic high



schools, the Mass was sponsored by the Diocese of Cleveland Office for Human Life. After the Mass, students from the various Catholic high schools led a Rosary for Life with those in attendance.

Concelebrating with Bishop Perez were Fr. Richard Bona, Msgr. Richard Antall, Fr. Dennis Kristancic, and Fr. James Kulway. Bishop Perez also was assisted by Deacon Gerry Blanda.

Readings and prayers of the faithful were presented by students from Elyria Catholic High School and missionaries from The Culture Project.

In his remarks, Bishop Perez talked about gathering with a joy of gratitude but also sadness, referencing the 60 million lives lost to abortion as a result of legalized abortion. “God’s heart weeps over this.”

Perez also talked about how, at every stage of development, whether in his mother’s womb, as young child, and now as our Bishop, “it’s still me.” The Bishop also referred to the annual 40 Days for Life campaign which will begin again during the month of February.

The Bishop also offered a special blessing to all those would be traveling to the Annual March for Life taking place on Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup> in Washington DC.

The Mass was live streamed on the Diocesan website and also broadcast on AM 1260 The Rock, Cleveland’s Catholic radio station.

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
You are invited to the  
**40 Days for Life Closing Rally**

**Saturday, April 4th**  
**2:00pm**  
**Preterm - 12000 Shaker Blvd**

**Keynote Speaker**

**Sue Thayer**  
**40 Days National Director of Outreach**  
**Also speaking:**  
**Pam Gibson—Alternaterm**  
**Pastor Walt Moss**

May each person  
suffering from the  
loss of a child  
through abortion  
find hope and  
healing in Christ.

**9DAYS** FOR LIFE  
www.9daysforlife.com

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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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