

Books

- *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, published by the Vatican Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2003. This comprehensive document details and affirms the Church's social justice teachings. This key resource is also available online at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html (a question guide is available in the "Extra Materials" section at <https://www.garysynod.com/social-teaching>)
- *Justice & Peace: A Christian Primer* by J. Milburn Thompson, Orbis Books, 2003. This text takes an issue-by-issue approach to Catholic social teaching.
- *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action* by Thomas Massaro, S.J., Rowman & Littlefield, 2012. This text begins with a historical review of the Catholic social justice tradition and then explicates the principles of Catholic social teaching.
- *The Challenge and Spirituality of Catholic Social Teaching* by Marvin L. Krier Mich, Orbis Books, 2011. This text is organized around the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.
- *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* by Bryan N. Massingale, Orbis Books, 2010.
- *Doing Faithjustice: An Introduction to Catholic Social Thought* by Fred Kammer, S.J., Paulist Press, 1991. This text promotes "faithjustice," a term the author promotes, as a virtue and effectively distinguishes social justice from charity.
- *\$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America* by Kathryn J. Edin & Luke Shaefer, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Co., 2015. This book follows eight families who are part of the 1.5 million families and 3 million children in the United States who live on \$2.00 per person a day.

Web Pages

- *Catholic Social Teaching*, a comprehensive online resource published by the USCCB. <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/index.cfm>.
- *Vatican Statements on Social Justice*, published online by the USCCB. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/vatican-statements-on-social-justice.cfm> .
- *Historical context and Summary of the Social Justice Encyclicals*, published by U.S. Catholic. This is an excellent resource for educating parishioners. It does not include *Laudato Si* as it ends with Pope Benedict's 2009 encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*. http://www.uscatholic.org/busy_christians_guide_catholic_social_teaching.
- *Catholic Social Justice Encyclicals*, published online by the Australian Social Justice Council. This easy-to-use website provides online access to all of the encyclicals published as part of the Church's modern social justice tradition, beginning with *Rerum Novarum*, promulgated by Pope Leo XIII, and ending with *Ladauto Si'*, promulgated by Pope Francis. <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/social-teaching/encyclicals>.
- *Justice, Peace and Human Development*, published by the USCCB. This website clarifies Church social teachings, provides links to position papers, and shares resources on a broad range of social and human rights issues. <http://www.usccb.org/about/justice-peace-and-human-development/index.cfm>.
- *In the Name of Peace: Collective Statements of the United States Catholic Bishops on War and Peace, 1990 – 1980*. <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/upload/In-the-Name-of-Peace.pdf>.
- *Justice*, a social justice webpage published by U.S. Catholic. It provides access to articles on various topics associated with Catholic social teaching. <http://www.uscatholic.org/topics/justice>.
- *Social Justice* published online by the Catholic Education Resource Center. This resource addresses a broad array of social justice concerns from the perspective of Catholic social teaching. <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/religion-and-philosophy/social-justice/>.
- *Education for Justice: A Project of Education of Concern*, published by the Center for Concern. This comprehensive website features a broad array of resources pertaining to Catholic social teaching. <https://educationforjustice.org/>.

- *Social Justice Catholic Teachings*, published online by the Archdiocese of Vancouver. This comprehensive webpage features a wealth of social justice resources. <http://rcav.org/social-justice-catholic-teachings/>.

Magazines and Journals

- *America Magazine*, published by the Jesuits of the United States. This well-respected magazine features news and op ed pieces concerning Roman Catholicism and how it relates to American politics and cultural life. <https://www.americamagazine.org/>.
- *Commonweal* is an independent publication that explores the interface of Catholicism and American politics and culture. <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/>.
- *Justice Magazine: The Catholic Social Justice Quarterly*, an independent, nonprofit publication that reports on and promotes the social teachings of the Catholic Church. https://issuu.com/justicemagazine/docs/justice_magazine.
- *Crisis Magazine*, an independent lay Catholic publication *that aspires to analyze, discuss, and propose “sane solutions” to social and economic problems from a variety of “prudential positions.”* <http://www.crisismagazine.com/>.

Apps

- *Social Justice Solutions*, an app that features news, blogs, and opinions on the current state of social work and social justice in the world. It offers a diverse range of opinions from members in some 30 countries. The app’s primary goal is to provide an information hub for individuals and organizations seeking to promote a socially just world based on the principle of compassion. <http://appcrawlr.com/ios/social-justice-solutions>.

Speakers

- Deacon John Bacon, Holy Name Parish, Cedar Lake, IN. Topic: Catholic bioethics. Contact information: 219.613.0591, jabacon@yahoo.com
- Kevin Considine, Ph.D., Calumet College of St. Joseph, Hammond, IN. Topics: Catholic social teaching, race and racism, and reconciliation. Contact information: 219.473.4353, kconsidine@ccsj.edu
- Joan Crist, Ph.D., Calumet College of St. Joseph, Hammond, IN. Topics: Catholic social teaching and interreligious dialogue. Contact information: 219.473.4304, jcrist@ccsj.edu
- Deacon Tom Gryzbek, St. Andrew’s Parish, Merrillville, IN. Topic: abortion. Contact information: 219.789.5566, tom.gryzbek@franciscanalliance.org
- Deacon Daniel Lowery, St. Mary’s Parish, Crown Point, IN. Topics: social justice principles, the public policy process, assisted suicide, and Diocesan Haiti initiatives. Contact information: 219.677.3160, dlowery@ccsj.edu
- Deacon Tom Gryzbek can give a presentation called “Conversation Before Crisis.” It is a discussion of end-of-life issues and advanced directives.
Length: 90-120 minutes
Format: lecture
Recommended Audience: adults
Recommended Audience Size: doesn’t matter
Recommended Season (if any): doesn’t matter
Preparatory Work: none
Presenter: Deacon Tom Gryzbek
Contact Information: (219) 789-5566
Equipment Requirements: PowerPoint and Projector

- Deacon John Bacon can give a presentation called “Catholic Bioethics.” It is an overview of the Catholic moral tradition and its application to medicine, the environment, armed conflict, etc.
Length: 3 hours
Format: lecture/discussion
Recommended Audience: adults
Recommended Audience Size: up to 100
Recommended Season (if any): none
Preparatory Work: none
Presenter: Deacon John Bacon
Contact Information: (219) 613-0591; jabacon3@yahoo.com
Equipment Requirements: none

Movies

- **War**
 - ✓ *Killing Fields* (massacre in our times; Isaiah 5:1-7; Matthew 21:33-43)
 - ✓ *Saving Private Ryan* (embracing your mission in life; Isaiah 8:23-9:3, Matthew 4:12-23)
 - ✓ *Born on the Fourth of July* (from war to peace; Acts 2:1-11, John 20:19-23)
 - ✓ *Braveheart* (a savior of his people unto death; Isaiah 9:1-6, Titus 2:11-14, Luke 2:1-14)
 - ✓ *Gallipoli* (war and peace; Wisdom 9:13-18, Philemon 9-10, 12-17, Luke 14-25-33)
 - ✓ *Gods and Generals* (a higher authority; Acts 5:27-32, Revelation 5:11-14, John 21:1-14)
 - ✓ *Thirteen Days* (Cuban Missile Crisis; Daniel 12:1-3, Hebrews 10:11-14, Mark 13:24-32)
 - ✓ *When the Wind Blows* (nuclear survival)
- **Racism**
 - ✓ *Sommersby* (Ku Klux Klan; Acts 1:1-11, Ephesians 1:17-23, Mark 16:15-20)
 - ✓ *Long Walk Home* (Rosa Parks; 1 Kings 17:10-16, Hebrews 9:24-28, Mark 12:38-44)
 - ✓ *To Kill a Mockingbird* (a just man and the law; Deuteronomy 5:12-15, 2 Cor. 4:6-11, Mark 2:23-3:6)
 - ✓ *What’s Cooking?* (thanks-giving not thanks-taking; 1 King 8:55-61, Colossians 3:12-17, Mark 5:18-20)
 - ✓ *The Green Mile* (masters, servants, healing; 1 Kings 8:41-43, Galatians 1:1-2, 6-10, Luke 7:1-10)
 - ✓ *Remember the Titans* (racial integration; Nehemiah 8:2-4, 5-6, 8-10, 1 Cor. 12:12-30, Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21)
 - ✓ *Cry Freedom* (South African martyr; Acts 8:5-8, 14-17, John 14:15-21)
 - ✓ *Hurricane* (victory over darkness; Acts 10:34-43, John 20:1-9)
 - ✓ *Places of the Heart* (united in Eucharist; Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14-16, John 6:51-58)
 - ✓ *Snow Falling on Cedars* (the poor in spirit; Zephaniah 2:3, 3:12-13, Matthew 5:1-12)
 - ✓ *Places of the Heart* (revenge and forgiveness; Deuteronomy 8:2-16, John 6:51-58)
 - ✓ *Do the Right Thing* (urban racism)
- **Labor Issues**
 - ✓ *Matewan* (justice for workers; Isaiah 55:6-9, Matthew 29:1-16)
 - ✓ *Wall Street* (greed; Amos 8:4-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-8, Luke 16:1-13)
 - ✓ *e Insider* (life and death convictions; Isaiah 50:4-7, Matthew 26:14 – 27:66)
- **Tolerance**
 - ✓ *Chocolat* (hypocrisy; Joel 2:12-18, 2 Cor. 5:20-6:12, Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18)
 - ✓ *Lilies of the Field* (collaboration; Isaiah 55:1-11, 1 John 5:1-9, Mark 1:7-11)
- **Abortion**
 - ✓ *Bless This Child* (attack on the innocents; 1 John 1:5-2:2, Matthew 2:13-18)
 - ✓ *Jesus’ Son* (unintentional healer; Isaiah 35:1-6, Matthew 11:2-11)
- **Prison/Capital Punishment**
 - ✓ *Dead Man Walking* (death row; Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17, Matthew 25:31-46)
 - ✓ *The Hurricane* (prison reform; Acts 10:34, 37-43, John 20:1-9)

- ✓ *The Shawshank Redemption* (the last shall be first; Isaiah 66:18-21, Hebrews 12:5-7, Luke 13:22-30)
- **Prejudice/Discrimination**
 - ✓ *Chariots of Fire* (running the good race; Acts 7:55-60, Revelation 22:12-20, John 17:20-26)
 - ✓ *Philadelphia* (AIDS; 2 Kings 5:14-17, 2 Timothy 2:8-13, Luke 17:11-19)
 - ✓ *Remember the Titans* (Nehemiah 8:2-10, 1 Corinthians 12:12-30, Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21)
 - ✓ *Gran Torino* (accepting immigrants)
 - ✓ *Hidden Figures* (breaking social barriers)
- **Civil Rights**
 - ✓ *The Long Walk Home* (Rosa Parks; 1 Kings 17:10-16, Hebrews 9:24-28, Mark 12:38-44)
- **Dignity of the Human Person**
 - ✓ *Finding Forrester* (role of mentor; Ezekiel:17:22-24, 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, Mark 4:26-34)
 - ✓ *Jesus of Montreal* (the zeal of Jesus; Exodus 20:1-17, 1 Corinthians 1:22-25, John 2:13-25)
 - ✓ *Long Walk Home* (racial dignity; 1 Kings 17:10-16, Hebrews 9:24-28, Mark 12:38-44)
 - ✓ *Molokai: The Story of Fr. Damien* (treatment of outcasts; Leviticus 13:1-2, 1 Cor. 10:31- 11:1, Mark 1:40 45)
 - ✓ *My Left Foot* (disabilities; Isaiah 43:18-19, 21-22, 24-25, 2 Cor. 1:18-22, Mark 2:1-12)
 - ✓ *Romero* (the poor and oppressed; Ezekiel 2:2-5, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, Mark 6:1-6)
 - ✓ *The Mission* (slavery; Acts 1:15-26, 1 John 4:11-16, John 17:11-19)
 - ✓ *Schlinder's List* (life, death, love; Acts 14:21-27, Revelation 21:1-5, John 13:31-35)
 - ✓ *Best Boy* (overcoming disabilities)
- **Environmental Issues**
 - ✓ *Burning Season* (Brazilian rain forest; Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 5:7-9, John 12:20-33)
 - ✓ *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings* (Isaiah 52:7-10, Hebrews 1:1-6, John 1:1-18)
 - ✓ *Erin Brockovich* (leadership; Acts 2:14-41, John 10:1-10)
 - ✓ *At Play in the Fields of the Lord* (Deuteronomy 11:18-28, Matthew 7:21-27)
 - ✓ *A Civil Action* (Ezekiel 18:25-28, Matthew 21:28-32)
 - ✓ *An Inconvenient Truth* (the future of the planet)
 - ✓ *A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash* (dependence on fossil fuel)
- **Hunger**
 - ✓ *Spitfire Grill* (feed the hungry; 2 Kings 4:42-44, Ephesians 4:1-6, John 6:1-15)
- **Greed**
 - ✓ *The Godfather* (evil and corruption; Wisdom 7:7-11, Hebrews 4:12-14, Mark 10:17-30)
 - ✓ *Simple Plan* (the power of money; Isaiah 50:5-9, James 2:14-18, Mark 8:27-35)
 - ✓ *Meet Joe Black* (Ecclesiastes 1:2, 2:21-23, Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11, Luke 12:13-21)
 - ✓ *Wall Street* (unbridled American capitalism; (Amos 8:4-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-8, Luke 16:1-13)
- **Poverty**
 - ✓ *Angela's Ashes* (the effects of poverty; Isaiah 40:1-5, 2 Peter 3:8-14, Mark 1:1-8)
 - ✓ *Evita* (rise and fall; Sirach 3:17-18, Hebrews 12:18-24, Luke 14:1-14)
 - ✓ *The Grapes of Wrath* (dustbowl migration; Acts 13:14 – 43-52, Revelation 7:9-17, John 10:27-30)
 - ✓ *Entertaining Angels: The Dorothy Day Story* (Exodus 12:14, John 13:1-15)
 - ✓ *City of Joy* (Isaiah 55:1-3, Matthew 14:13-21)
 - ✓ *John Q* (health care inequality)
- **Suicide/Human Dignity**
 - ✓ *One True Thing* (end of life; Numbers 6:22-27, Galatians 4:4-7, Luke 2:16-21)
- **Slavery**
 - ✓ *Amistad* (who is my neighbor; Deuteronomy 30:10-14, Colossians 1:15-20, Luke 10:25-37)
 - ✓ *Born into Brothels* (child exploitation)
- **Political Injustice/Persecution**
 - ✓ *Far East* (Malachi 3:19-20, 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12, Luke 21:5-19)
 - ✓ *The Year of Living Dangerously* (political unrest; Zephaniah 3:14-18, Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 3:10-18)
 - ✓ *Beyond Rangoon* (journey of hope; Baruch 5:1-9, Philippians 1:4-1, Luke 3:1-6)
 - ✓ *Unforgiven* (anger and revenge; Sirach 27:30 – 28:7, Matthew 18:21-35)
 - ✓ *Les Miserables* (the face of God; Exodus 34:4-9, John 3:16-18)

- ✓ *A Man for All Seasons* (personal integrity; Acts 1:12-14, John 17:1-11)
- ✓ *Bob Roberts* (Malachi 1:14 – 2:10, Matthew 23:1-12)
- ✓ *Gandhi* (peaceful resistance)
- **Role of the Media**
 - ✓ *A Cry in the Dark (Evil Angels)* (media bias; Jeremiah 20:10-13, Matthew 10:26-33)
 - ✓ *The Post* (the role of the 1st Amendment)
- **Movie Resources**
 - ✓ *Lights, Camera . . . Faith: A Movie Lover's Guide to Scripture, A Movie Lectionary – Cycles A, B & C.* Peter Malone, MSC, Rose Macatte, FSP, Pauline Books and Media, Boston.

Evangelium Vitae Study Outline

Evangelium Vitae - Study Outline

This study outline follows the original table of contents of the encyclical, and includes the relevant section numbers.

INTRODUCTION

A. The Gospel of Life Is at the Heart of the Christian Message.

1. (§1) It is to be preached with dauntless fidelity as good news.
2. Christ calls us to open our free will to the power of the Holy Spirit.

B. Incomparable Worth of the Human Person.

1. (§2) Life is a process, not an individual circumstance.
2. Anyone open to truth and goodness can know the natural law written in the heart.

C. New Threats to Human Life.

1. (§3) Sinister to justify crimes against life in the name of personal freedom.
2. (§4) Widespread social conditioning has weakened the conscience in distinguishing between good and evil.

D. In Communion with the World's Bishops.

1. (§5) This encyclical is a united appeal of the world's episcopate.
2. (§6) All families are called to be sanctuaries of life.

I. THE VOICE OF YOUR BROTHER'S BLOOD

A. The Roots of Violence.

1. (§7) God did not make death; it came with Satan's envy.
2. Man is not predestined to evil, but remains free in the face of sin.
3. (§8) Man is his brother's keeper.
4. (§9) In spite of sinful behavior, not even a murderer loses his dignity.

B. The Eclipse of the Value of Life.

1. (§10) Violence against life takes many forms.
2. (§11) A crisis of culture generates societal skepticism, which hides the value of life.
3. (§13) A contraceptive mentality negates the full truth of the conjugal act and the full acceptance of the sexual partner.
4. (§15) The ill and dying are threatened by a culture that sees suffering as the epitome of evil.

C. The Perversion of Freedom.

1. (§18) Sinister choices are being justified in the name of personal freedom.
2. Democratic coexistence is threatened when the right to life is denied.
3. (§19) The roots of disorder lie in the concept of subjectivity.
4. Exaggerated individualism leaves no room for solidarity or democracy.
5. (§20) Freedom destroys itself when it is separated from the truth.

D. The Eclipse of the Sense of God and Man.

1. (§21) Without the Creator, the creature disappears.
2. (§22) Life becomes a thing to be manipulated.
3. (§23) Being becomes less important than having.
4. Sexuality is no longer a gift of self or an acceptance of the other.
5. Procreation becomes the enemy to be avoided.

E. Signs of Hope and Commitment.

1. (§25) The blood of Christ reveals man's greatness and his vocation.
2. (§26) Even in the midst of sin, we witness countless gestures of self-giving and sacrifice.
3. (§28) The power of grace is enormous, and helps us to proclaim, celebrate and serve the Gospel of Life.

II. THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE: THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE

A. Our Gaze Fixed on the Word of Life.

1. (§29) The Gospel of Life is concrete and personal.
2. Its truth can be known through our reason.
3. (§30) When we open ourselves to God's possibility, we are freed from sin and death.

B. Life is Always a Good.

1. (§31) Our freedom from slavery brings the gift of identity.
2. Man has a dignity that none can destroy.
3. Suffering is a challenge made beautiful in time.

C. Jesus Brings Life's Meaning to Fulfillment.

1. (§32) Life is a gift guarded by the Father.
2. (§33) Life is a journey amid contradictions.

D. God's Glory Shines in the Face of Man.

1. (§34) Man is called to grasp life's profound goodness.
2. (§35) Through life, God shares Himself with His creatures.
3. Man is gifted with reason, with the ability to discern between good and evil, and with free will.
4. (§36) Sin exchanges the truth of God for a lie.

E. Reverence and Love.

1. (§39) The history of man results from God's plan to bring together life's possibilities.
2. (§41) The height of love is to pray for one's enemies.
3. We must revere and love every person, good or evil.

F. Man's Responsibility to Life.

1. (§42) The defense and promotion of life belongs to every human being.
2. The preservation of the environment is no greater than the preservation of "human ecology".
3. Man is subject both to biological and moral laws.
4. (§43) Parents become partners in a divine undertaking.

G. The Dignity of the Unborn.

1. (§44) There is no part of the process of life that is separated from the work of God.

H. Life in Old age and Suffering.

1. (§46) Man is neither master of life nor of death.
2. (§47) The decision to live or die must be left to God.

I. The Law of Sinai and the Gift of the Spirit.

1. (§48) Truth is essential to life; the law of God reveals the truth.
2. What is at stake is the future of the world.

J. The Gospel of Life Is Fulfilled in the Cross.

1. (§50) By the Cross we are set free; it is our sure hope.
2. (§51) The paradox: Life finds its meaning when it is given up.

III. GOD'S HOLY LAW: YOU SHALL NOT KILL

A. Gospel and Commitment.

1. (§52) God's commandment is never detached from His love.
2. It is a gift meant for man's growth.

B. Human Life is Sacred and Inviolable.

1. (§53) On two commandments rest all of God's law: to love God and to love one's neighbor.
2. (§57) The deprivation of innocent life can never be licit as an end in itself.
3. Before the demands of morality, we are all equal.

C. The Unspeakable Crime of Abortion.

1. (§58) Among the crimes against life, abortion is particularly deplorable.
2. (§59) The acceptance of abortion signifies man's increasing incapacity to distinguish good and evil.

D. The Tragedy of Euthanasia.

1. (§64) The mystery of death is blurred when life is only valued for its pleasures.
2. Society cannot guarantee to man complete autonomy.
3. (§66) Suicide is the murder of the self, the rejection of love of self and of the absolute sovereignty of God over Life.
4. True compassion entails shared suffering, not the killing of the one in pain.

E. Civil and Moral Laws.

1. (§68) Life is not a right bestowed by the State.
2. Life is not a relative good, but an absolute good.
3. (§69) Civil law cannot rise higher than the innate moral law.
4. (§70) Ethical relativism, far from guaranteeing tolerance, belies the basic democratic relationship between civil and moral law.
5. (§71) Civil law is meant to safeguard, not create, innate rights — the first of which is the right to life.
6. (§74) Our reason confirms that killing is wrong.

IV. YOU DID IT TO ME: TOWARD A NEW CULTURE OF HUMAN LIFE

A. A People of and for Life.

1. (§78) Through the interior renewal of the Holy Spirit, we become a people for Life.
2. (§80) Man alone can do nothing; once adopted by God, man attains greatness.
3. (§81) Life finds meaning in giving and receiving love; in this, human sexuality attains full significance.

B. Celebrating the Gospel of Life.

1. (§83) Our proclamation must also be a celebration.
2. We need to develop a contemplative outlook, seeing the image of God in all people.
3. Discouragement then gives way to a challenge to find meaning.
4. We must rediscover the ability to revere and honor every person.
5. (§84) Through the sacraments we are sharers in divine life and are given all the spiritual strength necessary on our journey for everyday heroism.

C. Serving the Gospel of Life.

1. (§87) Promotion of life must be accomplished through consistent works of charity.
2. (§88) Education must be aimed at encouraging one and all to bear each other's burdens.
3. Family policy must be the driving force behind all social policy.
4. No single group has a monopoly on the defense of life.

D. The Family as the Sanctuary of Life.

1. (§92) Parents are coworkers with God.
2. Each family member is to be respected because of his or her personhood.
3. (§93) The family is called to daily prayer.
4. Care is to be given to the humble ordinary events of daily living.

E. Bringing about a Transformation of Culture.

1. (§95) We need to develop our sense of discernment for true values.
2. The purpose of The Gospel is the transformation of humanity from within to make it new.
3. (§96) To form the conscience, we need to recognize how truth is linked to freedom.
4. Sexuality enriches the whole person and manifests itself in the gift of self.
5. (§100) Prayer and fasting are the first and most effective weapons against the forces of evil.

F. The Gospel of Life is for the Whole of Human Society.

1. (§101) Not for believers alone, the Gospel of Life is for all.
2. Its value can be grasped by the light of reason.

CONCLUSION

- A. Mary the Mother of All Rescued Life. (§102)
 - B. Mary is Present in and Transcends History. (§103)
 - C. Through Mary We Recognize That Life Is Always at the Center of the Struggle between Good and Evil. (§104)
 - D. Mary is a Living Word of Comfort: Do Not Be Afraid! With God Nothing Is Impossible! (§105)
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Discussion Questions

INTRODUCTION

1. Why did Pope John Paul II write *Evangelium Vitae*?

PART ONE

PRESENT-DAY THREATS TO HUMAN LIFE

1. What are the threats to life today? (§10) What threats to life are of greatest concern in this encyclical? (§11)
2. What once were considered criminal acts are now considered rights. How does Pope John Paul II explain this transformation in light of the crisis in culture? (§11) In light of the structure of sin? (§12)
3. How are contraception and abortion linked as “fruits of the same tree”? (§13)
4. What is the attitude of today’s culture toward suffering? (§15)
5. Our Holy Father speaks of a “perverse idea of freedom”. (§18) What are the characteristics of this notion of freedom (§19), and how does it affect society? (§20) What is the basis of the conflict between the “culture of life” and the “culture of death”? (§21)
6. Why is the moral conscience of man in danger? (§24)

PART TWO

LIFE AS GIFT

1. What is the Gospel of Life? (§29-51)

2. Pope John Paul II tells us that through Jesus, man is given the possibility of knowing the complete truth concerning the value of human life, and the possibility of accomplishing that truth. Why does he speak of a truth to be accomplished? (§29)
3. How does the life of Jesus confirm great value of human life? (§33) Why is life always good? (§37-38)
4. How has God given man the means for exercising his freedom with respect to life? (§39-40)
5. What is man's responsibility for life? (§42)
6. "It is altogether impossible for life to remain authentic and complete once it is detached from the good; and the good, in its turn is essentially bound to the commandments of the Lord, that is, to the law of life. The good to be done is not added to life as a burden which weighs on it, since the very purpose of life is that good, and only by doing it can life be built up". (§48) Explain.
7. Why is bodily life not an absolute good? (§47) What is the most authentic meaning of life? (§49)
8. What is meant in saying the Gospel of Life is brought to fulfillment on the tree of the Cross? (§50-51)

PART THREE LIFE AS RESPONSIBILITY

9. How does the gift of life become a commandment? (§52)
10. Under what circumstances is the death penalty warranted? (§56)
11. What are some of the pressures placed on women today? (§58-59) Why is procured abortion so morally grave? (§58) Why should the commandment not to kill be extended to the human embryo? (Read the beautiful second paragraph of §61 aloud.)
12. What is the canonical punishment by the Church for those who procure or commit abortion? (§62)
13. When are prenatal diagnostic techniques permissible, and when are they shameful? (§63)
14. What is the difference between euthanasia and withholding aggressive medical treatment? Why is the former condemned, and when is the latter permitted? (§65)
15. "It is in the face of death that the riddle of human existence becomes most acute". What is this riddle? How does it find an answer in the victory of Christ? (§67)
16. How does the issue of respect for life reveal the contradictions concealed in ethical relativism? (§70)
17. What is the correct relationship between civil law and moral law? (§71) Are pluralism and democracy absolute goods?
18. Pope John Paul II insists that freedom is authentic only when it is oriented toward the good. What does he mean and why is it important? (§74; also see Part Two, Question 6)
19. Can Christians ever cooperate formally with evil? (§74) Why do the negative commandments always bind, regardless of intentions? (§75)

20. God has entrusted us to one another, to care for one another, especially the weak or threatened. How can we do this? (§77)

PART FOUR LIFE AS A TASK TO BE PROMOTED

21. How are we as the “people of life” to evangelize the world with the Gospel of Life? What is the task of teachers, catechists, and theologians in this work? (§81, 82)

22. Pope John Paul II speaks of “everyday heroism”, “the service of charity”, and bearing one another’s burdens. (§86-88) Why is selflessness important when we proclaim the Gospel of Life?

23. “Absolute respect for every innocent human life also requires the exercise of conscientious objection in relation to procured abortion and euthanasia”. (§89) What does this mean for Catholic citizens? Catholic politicians?

24. What is the role of the family in living and proclaiming the Gospel of Life? (§92)

25. Why do we need a cultural transformation (§95), and what is the first step involved? (§96)

26. How does the trivialization of sexuality lead to contempt for new life? (§97; see also Part One, Question 3)

27. What is the fundamental understanding necessary in order to develop a correct scale of values? (§98)

28. What fundamental contribution do the Church and humanity expect from women? (§99)

29. For whom is the Gospel of Life given? (§101)

30. The concept of gradualism is a frequent theme of Pope John Paul II. Although we live in an age of instant gratification, this encyclical again reminds us that life is a process. How is our earthly life a part of this process?

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