



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
OF CHARLESTON

COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Homily Helps — Respect Life Month

Below is a list of topics regarding life issues that can hopefully serve as a resource / inspiration for homilies. Please consider the following topics in your homily preparations:

Death Penalty

1. *Capital punishment*

- USCCB, *A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death*: “No matter how heinous the crime, if society can protect itself without ending a human life, it should do so.”
- Protecting the lives of those on death row is necessary to building up a culture of life
- Pope Francis: “The dignity of a person is not lost even after committing the most serious crimes.”
- Death penalty vs. Self defense

Abortion

1. *Abortion*

- Supporting and procuring abortion is not compatible with being Catholic
- The Church has been consistent in its teaching on abortion.
- CCC-2271: “Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person – among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life ... Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an ends or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law.”
- Procuring, supporting, or participating in abortion incurs *latae sententiae* and *ferendae sententiae* excommunication (please see Can. 1398 and 1329)
- We are all created in the image and likeness of God. In Genesis, Adam and Eve were called to be fruitful and multiply. Abortion is the perversion and rejection of God’s call to create.

2. *Life should be protected from conception to natural death*

- Every person has the right to life from conception to natural death
- CCC 2258: “Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being.”
- The fifth commandment: Thou shalt not kill
- It is our duty to protect the most vulnerable in our world. St. John Paul II: “The first and most fundamental of all human rights is the right to life, and when this right is denied all other rights are threatened. A society will be judged on the basis of how it treats its weakest members; and among the most vulnerable are surely the unborn and the dying.”

3. *Healing and forgiveness after abortion*

- There is no sin too great for God to forgive
- Cling to the sacraments and get spiritual direction
- Men and women are not alone in their healing process
- There is healing available through programs such as Rachel’s Vineyard retreats

Doctor-Assisted Suicide

1. *Caring for the elderly*

- Every person, young and old, deserves the same love, respect, and care as any other person. We are all equals in the eyes of God.
- Doctor-assisted suicide is immoral, CCC 2276: “Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible.”
- We should help the elderly and infirmed have easier access to the Sacraments. Do what you can to drive them to Mass / reconciliation with you.
- Visit them often
- Honor their memory and help prepare for a proper funeral / burial

Life / Family Life

1. *Life is a gift from God*

- God did not need to create us to be whole, he did it because he loved us
- Free will is evidence of God’s love for us: he allows us to choose him or reject him by living autonomously
- It is our responsibility to cherish the gift that God gave us

- God calls all of us to participate in promoting a culture of life
- The joys of this life are a foretaste of heaven

2. *Life in grace and the role of the Sacraments in our spiritual life*

- The Sacraments are the source of grace, the strength and animating principle of the spiritual life
- The Eucharist is eternal food that sustains our spiritual life
- Participation in grace leads us to eternal life in God's presence
- Sacraments give us the strength to avoid sin

3. *The primary end of marriage: life*

- God's first call to Adam and Eve to procreate
- Marriage is giving of oneself for the good of another
- Teach your children the faith so that they become disciples of Christ
- Spread awareness that life is a gift, not a burden
- Pray for the traditional family unit and the Domestic Church, and pray for all those called to the vocation of marriage

4. *Parents' role in their children's lives*

- Authority over children is a gift from God
- We are supposed to be the primary educators of the faith for our children
- *Gaudium et Spes* #50: "Parents should regard as their proper mission the task of transmitting human life and educating those to whom it has been transmitted. They should realize that they are thereby cooperators with the love of God the Creator, and are, so to speak, the interpreters of that love."
- *Humanae Vitae* #10: "Responsible parenthood, as we use the term here, has one further essential aspect of paramount importance. It concerns the objective moral order which was established by God, and of which a right conscience is the true interpreter. In a word, the exercise of responsible parenthood requires that husband and wife, keeping a right order of priorities, recognize their own duties toward God, themselves, their families and human society."