

Knights of Columbus

Culture of life

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A Culture of Life

- Culture is the way in which men and women in a community mold or shape a particular way of relating to nature, to each other and to God, thus establishing a typical style of human coexistence.
- One of the primary values of the Culture of Life is respect for human life from its beginning at conception until its natural end.
- When a culture is capable of protecting and encouraging this vision of mankind through its political, social, economic and legal structures, it can be called a culture of life.
- Building such a culture not only requires collaboration of society's leaders, but it is also a duty and a right of all Christians.
- As Catholics, in every circumstance, we must do all we can to build a culture of life.

We have some work to do!

- Based on the findings of a recent Gallup poll released on May 30, 2014, Americans are becoming more accepting of a number of controversial activities:
 - 90 % of Americans approve of contraception.
 - 69 % of Americans approve of divorce.
 - 66 % of Americans approve of premarital sex.
 - 65% of Americans approve of embryonic stem cell research.
 - 58% of Americans approve of childbirth outside of marriage.
 - 58% of Americans approve of same-sex unions.
 - 52% of Americans approve of euthanasia.
 - 42% of Americans approve of abortion.
- This has consequences.

Some Bad News

- In the United States, one-third of all pregnancies end in abortion (that's 1.2 to 1.3 million pregnancies each year).
 - One third of all abortions in the US are performed by Planned Parenthood.
 - 83% of abortions are to unmarried women.
 - 90% of babies with Downs syndrome are aborted.
- Oregon and the United Kingdom were exposed for using the bodies of aborted babies for the generation of electricity.
- There were 71 legal assisted suicide deaths in Oregon in 2013.
- U. S. Government supported Population Services International (PSI) is providing IUDs and abortifacients in 52 countries.
- Notre Dame University celebrated National Coming Out Day on October 11, 2013.
 - This year, a pro-marriage club was denied official status at Notre Dame.

Some Good News

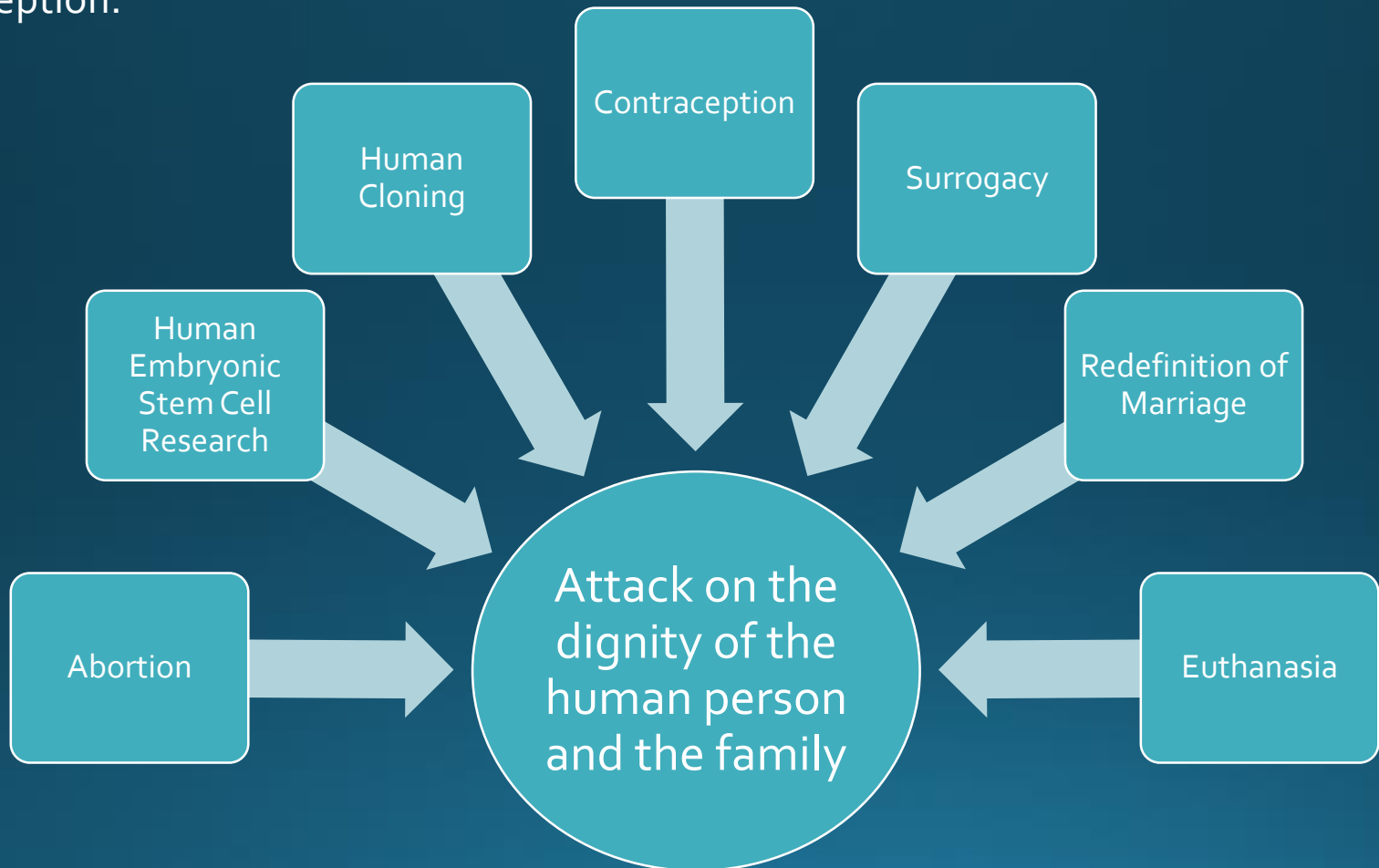
- Polling data suggests that the United States is becoming more Pro-life:
 - 64% of Americans support legislation to protect pain-capable babies from abortions.
 - 79% of Americans would restrict abortions more than the Roe v Wade decision.
- May 13, 2014 marked the anniversary of the conviction of late-term abortionist Kermit Gosnell in Philadelphia.
- Legislation at the state level has successfully restricted abortion and increased protections for pregnant women.
- This year, Louisiana HB 388 passed into law which requires abortion doctors to have hospital admitting privileges.
- Similar laws have been passed in Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama.
- These are steps in the right direction.
- Your efforts are producing tangible, positive results!

There Is More Than One Moral Threat to Human Life

- What moral issues are covered under the Culture of Life?
 - Abortion
 - Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research
 - Human Cloning
 - Contraception
 - In Vitro Fertilization (IVF)
 - Surrogacy
 - Redefinition of Marriage
 - Euthanasia

How are these culture of life issues related?

Pope Francis in the Holy Land said: “Every child needs to be accepted and protected...children need to be welcomed and defended, from the moment of their conception.”



“As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live.”
Pope Saint John Paul II

A Message from the Pope

"We have to ask ourselves who are we as we stand before the child Jesus? Who are we standing as we stand before today's children?

Are we like Mary and Joseph who welcomed Jesus and cared for him with a love of a father and a mother? Or, are we like Herod who wanted to eliminate him? The child Jesus, born in Bethlehem, every child who is born and grows up in every part of our world is a diagnostic sign indicating the state of health of our families, our communities, our nations.

Such a frank and honest diagnosis can lead us to a new kind of lifestyle where our relationships are no longer marked by conflict, oppression, and consumerism but fraternity, forgiveness and reconciliation, solidarity and love."

Pope Francis homily in Bethlehem on May 25, 2014

Destruction of the Family

Contraception

- Introduction of “the pill”
- All churches opposed it until 1930.
- Main argument against: increased promiscuity and damage to marriage.

No Fault Divorce

- Started in US in 1969
- View of marriage as a mere convenience, existing only for personal happiness

Redefinition Of Marriage

- Serious public consideration started 20 years ago.
- Massachusetts became first state to legalize same-sex marriage 10 years ago.

In 2010, Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, the archbishop of Buenos Aires, declared the redefinition of marriage a “destructive attack on God’s plan.”

Disclaimer

- The content of this presentation is intended to be used to stimulate thought and discussion.
- The content is believed to be accurate to the best of our ability.
- However, it is incomplete due to its summary nature.
- The intent is to provide some foundational information that can be used as a starting point for further independent and in-depth study.
- It is hoped that you will be motivated to publically defend the Church's teaching on these Culture of Life issues.

Intrinsic Evils

- The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops provides guidance as given below:
 - There are some things we must never do, as individuals or as a society, because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor.
 - Such actions are so deeply flawed that they are always opposed to the authentic good of persons.
 - These are called intrinsically evil actions.
 - They must always be rejected and opposed and must never be supported or condoned.

The Natural Law

- We live in a secular society, so we must find common ground.
 - Secular people think they are rational and they think their emotional arguments are superior to any religious argument.
 - We must speak a language that all people of goodwill can understand.
- That language is the Natural Law.
 - Martin Luther King used it in his letter from Birmingham jail.
 - It acknowledges that a moral law is built into nature (i.e. creation).
 - Natural law provides a “fixed standard” which is integrated into the plan of the Creator as seen in revelation as well as through reason.

God wrote two books:



Judgments of right and wrong
imply a fixed standard.

It is the law written on the heart.
(see Romans 2:14-15)

No contradiction - God is the source of both.

Arguments Against Specific Immoral Acts

Some Arguments Against Contraception

- Contraception is any action that is specifically intended to render the sexual act non-procreative—whether as an end or a means.
- The question of morality of contraception hinges in part on the value of procreation of a new human person.
- Contraception severs the connection between having sex and having babies.
- Sex between a man and a woman should be an expression of complete self-giving, exclusive to one's spouse and open to children (so the beloved is unique and irreplaceable).

Some Arguments Against Contraception

- The effects of widespread use of contraception was predicted by Pope Paul VI in *Humanae Vitae*:
 - A general lowering of moral standards throughout society.
 - A rise in infidelity.
 - A lessening of respect for women by men.
 - The coercive use of reproductive technologies by governments.
- This was written in the 1960's.
- So, have these predictions been proven true?

Some Arguments Against Abortion

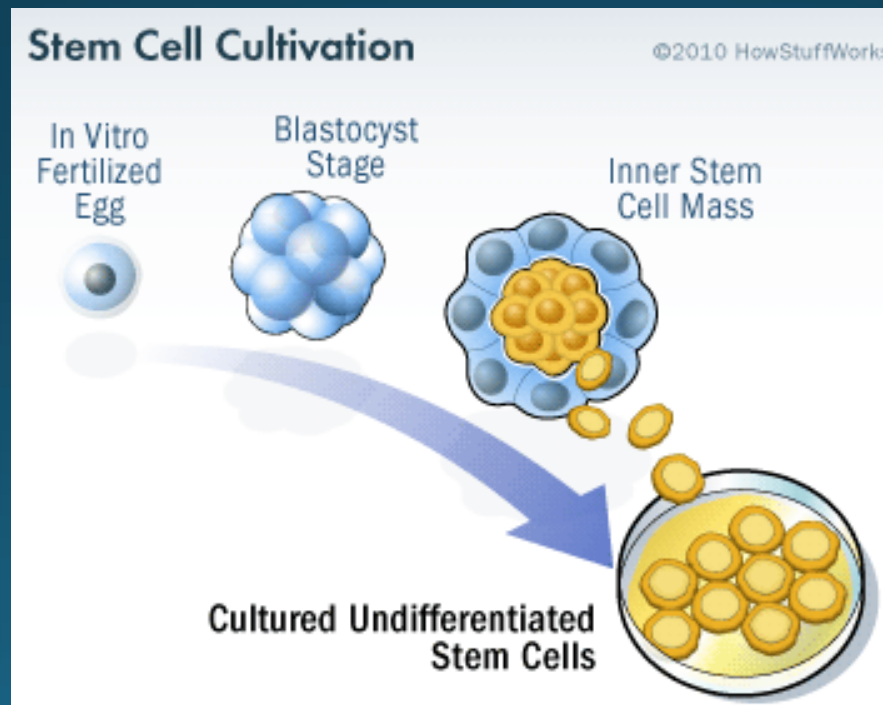
- It is critical that everyone understands the fundamental truth of human life.
- Human life begins at the moment of conception.
 - Egg and sperm unite so as to create a new, individual, living, whole human person.
 - This can be confirmed by genetics: unique human DNA.
 - This new life can be clearly distinguished from the cells of the mother and father.
 - This new life will actively develop toward human maturity, in accordance with intrinsic human nature.

Some Arguments Against Abortion

- It is always wrong to kill innocent human life.
- Much confusion arises out of arguments related to abilities and personhood, but engaging such arguments are not often needed.
- Definition: a person is a human being regarded as an individual.
- If there is any question whether we should recognize a human being as a person, history dictates that we err on the side of recognizing the rights of those who are powerless and without a voice.
- If human beings do not have a fundamental right to life, then other proposed rights are meaningless because all other rights depend on a person's existence.

Some Arguments Against Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research

- A stem cell is type of cell from which other cells have their origin.
- Human Embryonic Stem Cell research requires the destruction of a human embryo to harvest stem cells.



Some Arguments Against Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research

- A human embryo is simply a human being at an early stage of life.
- This act is the killing of innocent human life.
- In this case, the main argument in favor of this research is the potential benefits for people suffering from various diseases.
 - The ends do not justify the means (i.e. evil should never be done such that good may come from it – See Romans 3:8, and St. Augustine).
 - There are no current ESC therapies, but there are hundreds of therapies using adult stem cells.

Some Arguments Against Human Cloning

- Cloning refers to the making of an identical (or virtually identical) copy of something else.
- Human cloning is also known as Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer.
 - The nucleus of a body (somatic) cell is fused with a de-nucleated ovary cell (oocyte) to produce a new human being.
- Much confusion arises out of the difference between “reproductive” and “therapeutic” cloning.
 - Methods are the same; only the end use is different.
 - Therapeutic cloning will inevitably lead to reproductive cloning.



Some Arguments Against Human Cloning

- There are three lines of reasoning against human cloning (see **Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life** by William May) :
 1. It is not lawful for man on his own initiative to separate the unitive and procreative meanings of the conjugal act.
 2. This changes the generation of human life from an act of procreation to one of reproduction, treating the child as if he or she were a product.
 3. A man and a woman “give” themselves fully and exclusively to each other in marriage. The fruit of their union is new life. Attempting to give themselves to another in any form dishonors their marital covenant.

Some Arguments Against Surrogacy

- In 2014, the Louisiana House of Representatives passed a bill 79-14 to establish enforceable, legal surrogacy birth contracts between married couples and the women who carry their children in Louisiana.
 - It was vetoed by Governor Jindal.
- Surrogacy is the process of giving birth as a surrogate mother or of arranging such a birth.
- Artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization (IVF), surrogate motherhood, and lesser known procedures are used to address infertility.
- By using donated sperm, a donated embryo, and a surrogate mother, a child can be born who can never know his biological mother or father, or even their family roots.
- For those who desperately want the gift of a child, we must reach out to them. We must offer them love, support and understanding.

Some Arguments Against Surrogacy

- The Catholic Church teaches that fertilization is morally right only when it is the result of marital sexual intercourse.
- "A child is not something owed to one, but is a gift. The 'supreme gift of marriage' is a human person. A child may not be considered a piece of property, an idea to which an alleged 'right to a child' would lead. In this area, only the child possesses genuine rights: the right 'to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents,' and 'the right to be respected as a person from the moment of conception.'" (CCC 2378).
- "The child has the right to be conceived, carried in the womb, brought into the world and brought up within marriage." (*Donum Vitae*)
- A child is not an object, so he or she should not be devalued as such.
 - As with IVF and cloning, this is reproduction instead of procreation.

Some Arguments Against Marriage Redefinition

- What is Marriage?

- A comprehensive union of a man and woman.
- It is inherently ordered to procreation.
- It has two essential elements:
 - Consent (permanent, exclusive)
 - Consummation (conjugal act).
- It is the only institution that unites children to their parents.



- Men and women are equal as persons and complementary.
- Men and women are different, by nature, not just by society's conventions.
 - These differences are meant for union: each is for the other.

Some Arguments Against Marriage Redefinition

- The only public interest in the civil recognition of marriage is to unite children with their mom and dad.
 - Marriages have always been the main and most effective means of rearing healthy, happy, and well-integrated children.
 - The focus needs to be on the good of children rather than the perceived fulfillment of adults.
 - Families (the fundamental unit of society) must be strengthened because families raise the next generation of citizens.

Some Arguments Against Marriage Redefinition

- The main problem: the redefinition of marriage to accommodate various arrangements other than the union of one man and one woman.
 - When people come to understand marriage as only an institution for individual fulfillment and happiness, there is no longer any inherent connection between the relationship of adults, procreation, children, and a family of common ancestry.
- Redefining marriage to accommodate same-sex couples eliminates all authority for promoting the unique value of men and women marrying before having children.



Some Arguments Against Marriage Redefinition

- So called same-sex marriage is not a human right because it is not in accord with human nature.
- Marriage laws have not discriminated against those with same-sex attraction because all adults are treated the same, regardless of race, religion or sexual orientation.
- This human reality can only be recognized by states, cultures, and religions, but can never change.
- A child has a fundamental human right to know and, as far as possible, be cared for by his or her mother and father.

Some Arguments Against Marriage Redefinition

- This is not about equality.
- Equality means treating similar things similarly, but not things that are fundamentally different.
 - Example: Separate Men's and Women's restrooms.
- The current marriage laws already treat all people equally.
- Any unmarried man and unmarried woman can marry each other, regardless of their sexual orientation.
- The law is neutral with respect to orientation just as it ignores race and religion.

Some Arguments Against Marriage Redefinition

“For us, what you just pointed out is also important, the foundation of Natural Law that appears in the Bible that speaks about the union between man and woman. There have always been homosexuals. The island of Lesbos was known because homosexual women lived there, but it never occurred historically that they would seek to give them the same status of marriage. They were tolerated or they were not, they were admired or they were not, but they were never put on the same level. We know that in times of momentous change the homosexual phenomenon grew, but in this period, it is the first time that the legal problem of assimilating it to marriage has arisen, and this I consider an anti-value and an anthropological regression.”

Taken from **On Heaven And Earth** by Jorge Mario Bergoglio (Pope Francis) and Abraham Skorka.

Some Arguments Against Euthanasia

- As Catholics, we strongly affirm the intrinsic value and personal dignity of every human being which does not change no matter what the circumstances of his or her life.
- Euthanasia is an action or omission which of itself and by intention causes death with the purpose of eliminating all suffering.
- Euthanasia is always wrong and worthy of condemnation whether it is an intentional act or intentionally allowing someone to die by omission of care.
- Euthanasia always implies the intent to kill another person.
- Euthanasia does not eliminate suffering, but instead eliminates the person who suffers.
- Legalizing euthanasia gives us a right to directly take the life of someone else, to kill the innocent.
 - This directly contradicts the principle of respect for life, even if the person requests it.
 - The government is responsible for preventing the “tyranny of the majority.”

Some Points Regarding End of Life Issues



- It is important to distinguish between types of medical intervention:
 - Proportionate (ordinary)
 - Disproportionate (extraordinary)
- “A person has a moral obligation to use ordinary or proportionate means of preserving his or her life. Proportionate means are those that in the judgment of the patient offer a reasonable hope of benefit and do not entail an excessive burden or impose excessive expense on the family or the community.”
- “A person may forego extraordinary or disproportionate means of preserving life. Disproportionate means are those that in the patient’s judgment do not offer a reasonable hope of benefit or entail an excessive burden, or impose excessive expense on the family or the community.”

Some Points Regarding End of Life Issues



- The wave of emotions which accompanies the diagnosis of a degenerative or terminal illness may lead a patient to wish death upon himself.
- This is almost always an anguished plea for help and love.
- We need to offer these persons companionship and consolation on their difficult journey.
- Aside from medical care, these patients should be offered love.
- Those close to the patient, parents, children, doctors, and nurses should assure him or her that they will never be abandoned or considered a burden by their loved ones.

Religious Freedom



- Efforts are underway to remove religion from the public square.
 - Catholic adoption agencies in several states have been forced to terminate their programs rather than comply with legal mandates that they place children with same-sex couples.
 - Catholic businesses and institutions are being forced to pay for contraceptive and abortifacients in their health care plans because of the HHS mandate.
 - Religious displays on public grounds are banned by state and local governments and being challenged in the courts.

Religious Freedom



- Religious freedom cannot be reduced to freedom of worship.
- It is about Catholics making a unique contribution to the common good.
- A precise definition of Common Good was provided by the Second Vatican Council: “the sum of those conditions of the social life whereby men, families, and associations more adequately and readily may attain their own perfection.”
 - This is about human flourishing.
- Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted says: “Of course, if one’s faith does not impact one’s whole life, including one’s political and social responsibilities, then it is not authentic faith; it is a sham, a counterfeit.”

Religious Freedom



- We are obligated to follow our conscience. But, there is more to it...
- Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted says: "Before following our conscience, we must form it in accord with the voice of God. Our conscience is not the origin of truth. Truth lies outside of us; it exists independent of us and must be discovered through constant effort of mind and heart. This is no easy task for us who suffer the effects of original sin and must contend with the constant temptations of the devil. Conscience receives the truth revealed by God and discerns how to apply that truth to concrete circumstances."
- Conscience protection has a long-standing tradition in our country.
 - No one should be forced to commit an act that they consider morally wrong.
 - Example: a conscientious objection to participating in a war
 - Other examples: Doctors and nurses, wedding service providers

Courage is a Cardinal Virtue

- Our culture is increasingly hostile to the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Princeton professor Robert George stated: “The days of acceptable Christianity are over. The days of comfortable Catholicism are past.”
- We must have courage as Catholics.
 - It enables us to live in the truth in the face of difficulty, persecution, and fear (even fear of death).
- Catholics may be called a bigots.
 - A bigot is one who is obstinately or intolerantly devoted to his own opinions and prejudices.
- We must love our neighbor:
 - The woman suffering after an abortion
 - The father who abandons his family
 - The person with same-sex attraction
 - Those suffering from a terminal condition



We are called to Evangelize!

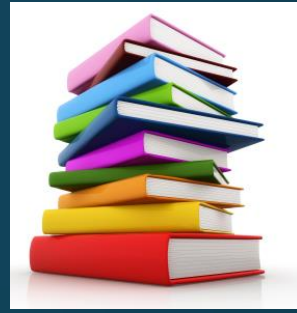
- Earlier this year at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast, Donald Cardinal Wuerl said, “Let us be agents of the New Evangelization, living as faithful followers of Jesus, your Son, in sharing our faith with those around us.”
- We must prepare ourselves to witness to the faith.
 - We must grow in knowledge and understanding.
- We must share the Good News!
 - “Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope...” (1 Peter 3:15)
- We must be joyous Christians.
- We must show others the good, the true, and the beautiful.



Short Term Plans

1. Anonymous on-line survey.
2. Meet with Pro-life leaders in the state
3. Promote a broad Culture of Life
4. Recommend educational resources
5. Promote NFP and NaPro Technology
6. Promote Pro-life activities throughout the state
7. Promote Pregnancy Centers
8. Promote Camp Joshua

References and Resources



- Books:

- **United States Catholic Catechism for Adults** by the USCCB
- **Genetic, Stem Cell Research, and Cloning** by L. K. Bevington, et. al.
- **Life Issues, Medical Choices** – Janet E. Smith and Christopher Kaczor
- **Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life** by William E. May
- **Making Choices** by Peter Kreeft
- **Ten Universal Principles** by Robert Spitzer, S. J.
- **The Abolition of Man** by C. S. Lewis
- **Three Approaches to Abortion** by Peter Kreeft
- **Theology of the Body for Beginners** by Christopher West
- **The Right to Privacy** by Janet E. Smith
- **Embryo (A Defense of Human Life)** by R. P. George and C. Tollefsen
- **The Essential Moral Handbook** by K. J. O'Neil and P. Black
- **What We Can't Not Know (A Guide)** by J. Budziszewski
- **50 Questions On The Natural Law** by Charles Rice
- **What is Marriage?** by Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson, Robert P. George
- **One Man One Woman** by Dale O'Leary
- **The Seven Big Myths About Marriage** by Christopher and Jennifer Kaczor
- **Adam and Eve after the Pill** by Mary Eberstadt
- **Beyond A House Divided** by Carl Anderson

References and Resources

- Encyclicals:

- *Humanae Vitae* by Pope Paul VI
- *Veritatis Splendor* by Pope John Paul II
- *Evangelium Vitae* by Pope John Paul II



- Booklets from the Bishops:

- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship by USCCB
- Catholics in the Public Square by Bishop Thomas. J. Olmsted
- A Will to Live: Clear Answers on End of Life Issues by Bishop Jose H. Gomez
- Considerations regarding proposals to give legal recognition to unions between homosexual persons by the CDF
- Instruction *Dignitas Personae* on Certain Bioethical Questions by the CDF



- Booklets from lay Catholics:

- "Getting the marriage conversation right" by William B. May
- "Why Homosexual Unions Are Not Marriages" by Catholic Answers
- "Straight Talk About Abortion" by Catholic Answers
- White paper: "When Does Human Life Begin?" by Maureen L. Condic

References and Resources

- Culture of Life Organizations:

- Louisiana Right to Life (prolifelouisiana.org)
- Population Research Institute (pop.org)
- Americans United for Life (aul.org)
- Catholics United for Life (catholicsunitedforlife.org)
- The Human Life Foundation (humanlifereview.com)
- Cardinal Newman Society (cardinalnewmansociety.org)



- Catholic Magazines:

- The New Oxford Review
- First Things
- Saint Austin Review
- Crisis



- News Sources:

- Catholic News Agency (catholicnewsagency.com)
- National Catholic Register (ncregister.com)
- Life Site News (lifesitenews.com)

