



Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF SAINT JOHN

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November 14, 2012

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Since 2005, in the Diocese of Saint John, the Second Sunday of Advent has been designated Pro-Life Sunday. Once again, I urge all of our parishes and mission churches to support the annual Pro-Life Sunday Second Collection on the weekend of December 9, 2012. Various groups such as Birthright, Mother and Child House, New Brunswick Right to Life, Euthanasia prevention, etc., will benefit from your generosity. As such, you will be participating in the very important work being done to save human life.

As Catholic Christians, this is an integral part of our faith. I want to reaffirm: we believe in the sacredness of life from conception to natural death. As Catholic Christians, we need to actively promote and uphold the sanctity of life. Both the late Holy Father Blessed John Paul II, as well as our present Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, have both spoken at length about our obligation as Catholic Christians to promote a culture of life in our society where the value and meaning of life are threatened in so many ways. This is part and parcel of our share in the mission of Jesus Christ entrusted to us in Baptism. More than ever, we are called to be “the People of Life.” (John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*)

In this Year of Faith, we are asked by the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, to deepen our understanding of the faith and embrace it anew. I take this opportunity to share with you some teachings from the Catechism of the Catholic Church on the value of human life as it reaffirms the dignity of the human person and the right that every person has to be respected. Every person from conception to natural death, in whatever state or condition they are found, has an “inalienable right to life.” CCC #2273.

Here are a few more teachings from the Catechism dealing with life issues:

- “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.” CCC #2270.
- “Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable.” CCC #2271.
- “Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible.” CCC #2276.
- “Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable.” CCC #2277.

In light of our belief, I urge you to work for and be associated with the promotion and defence of “the culture of life” which reflects our faith in Jesus Christ and is part and parcel of God’s plan for us.

As Blessed John Paul II once said, “We must speak on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves.” (John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*)

May the Lord bless us as we affirm our commitment to life.

Sincerely,

+Robert Harris
Bishop of Saint John