

# Reverence for Life

Deann T. Schindler  
600 Mork Street  
Lake Benton, MN 56149

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October is "Respect Life Month", which "is a year-round, nationwide effort to help Catholics understand, value, and become engaged with building a culture that cherishes every human life." This year's theme, which is featured October 2018 - September 2019, is "Every Life: Cherished, Chosen, and Sent." (United States Conference of Catholics Bishops, <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/2018/respect-life-program-faq.cfm#WhatisRLP>). This communication is a reminder to us all the importance and sanctity of life, and what our Catholic role and moral mentality should be to ensure the preservation of all life and God's will for humanity.

The fifth commandment, "Thou shall not kill" (*Ex* 20:13), has been instilled in all us Catholics since our earliest recollection of our Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD). The Catholic Church has been steadfast and unambiguous on its teaching as it relates to abortion, euthanasia, and assisted suicide. For example, "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception (Catholic Catechism, 2270; *Jer* 1:5; *Ps* 22:10-11), and "do not slay the innocent and the righteous. The deliberate murder of an innocent person is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human being, to the golden rule and to the holiness of the Creator (Catholic Catechism, 2261; *Ex* 23:7). Moreover, "...direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law: You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish (Catholic Catechism, 2271), and "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever 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" (Catholic Catechism, 2258). The fifth commandment forbids doing anything with the intention of indirectly bringing about a person's death (Catholic Catechism, 2269), "those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible (Catholic Catechism, 2276), and "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" (Catholic Catechism, 2277).

According to Reverend Joseph F. Martino, D.D., Hist. E.D., former Bishop of Scranton in his Pastoral letter, "the taking of innocent human life is so heinous, so horribly evil, and so absolutely opposite to the law of Almighty God that abortion must take precedence over every other issue. I repeat. It is the single most important issue confronting not only Catholics, but the entire electorate." Bishop Martino went on to say, "While the Church assists the State in the promotion of a just society, its primary concern is to assist men and women in achieving salvation. For this reason, it is incumbent upon bishops to correct Catholics who are in error regarding these matters. Furthermore, public officials who are Catholic and who persist in public support for abortion and other intrinsic evils should not partake in or be admitted to the sacrament of Holy Communion" (A Pastoral Letter from Bishop Martino, provided by the Eternal Word Television Network at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/BISHOPS/martnrespsun.HTM>).

November is election month, and we as Catholic Christians need to be proactive and research the candidates that are running for elected office. We all have a moral obligation, and thus must vote our moral conscious. Recall that October is also Rosary month, so please pray the Rosary for the defense and protection of all life, from conception to natural death. May God bless you.