
LIFE TEEN PARENT LETTER

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LIFE NIGHT: ONE HEART

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Perhaps one of the most memorable Disney 'dog' movies is the timeless classic, 'Old Yeller.' This 1957 movie is about a teenage boy (Travis) and his love for his yellow dog (a quirky, but smart, lab.) Travis, who at first is apprehensive about keeping Old Yeller, eventually grows to love the dog, especially after he saves his life on several occasions. Towards the end of the movie, however (*spoiler alert*) Old Yeller is bitten by a rabid animal and contracts rabies. Old Yeller's life must be ended. So, in a very emotional scene, Travis is forced to take Old Yeller into the barn where he shoots him, ending his life.

In this particular case, ending Old Yeller's life can be justified. Rabies is a terrible disease that can potentially affect a dog in a very negative way, making them aggressive and dangerous. In a sense, the dog no longer had any value. Can we say the same thing about people? Do human beings ever get to the point in which they do not have any, or as much, value? For example, someone who is terminally ill or elderly, or someone who has committed grave crimes, or even someone who is not yet born? Do these people have less value than anyone else, and if so, is it justifiable to end their lives?

In our last Life Night, we recognized that each person is created in the image and likeness of God. This alone gives a person value regardless of the circumstance. Euthanasia, abortion, and the death penalty may challenge us and reveal how pro-life we truly are. All three of these issues involve the intentional killing of a human being, the stopping of the human heart, and they devalue a person's worth based on their circumstance (terminally ill, elderly, not born yet, etc.)

To find out more information about the Church's teachings on these issues, read the Catechism of the Catholic Church (found on USCCB.org) Death Penalty CCC 2266, Abortion CCC 2270, Euthanasia CCC 2276, Justified Killing (war, self-defense) CCC 2263.

We, as Catholics, are called to be pro-life on all of these issues, but our pro-life stance must go beyond the voting box. We are all called to give a response, one of compassion and love, to those affected by these issues. Being pro-life doesn't just mean protesting in front of a Planned Parenthood; it means offering a girl who has had an abortion love and support as she struggles through a difficult time, and supporting single mothers. Being pro-life doesn't just mean recognizing the tragedy of someone who wants to end their life; it means visiting hospitals or nursing homes to talk with those who are terminally ill, letting them know how much they are loved, that their life always has value, and helping them find Jesus with them in their suffering.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. Read and discuss the story that was used in the Life Night, "The Conversion of Rudolph Hoss," with your family.
2. Which of the pro-life issues do you struggle with the most? Why? Have any of these issues affected our family?
3. How can we respond with compassion and love, as a family, to any of these issues?