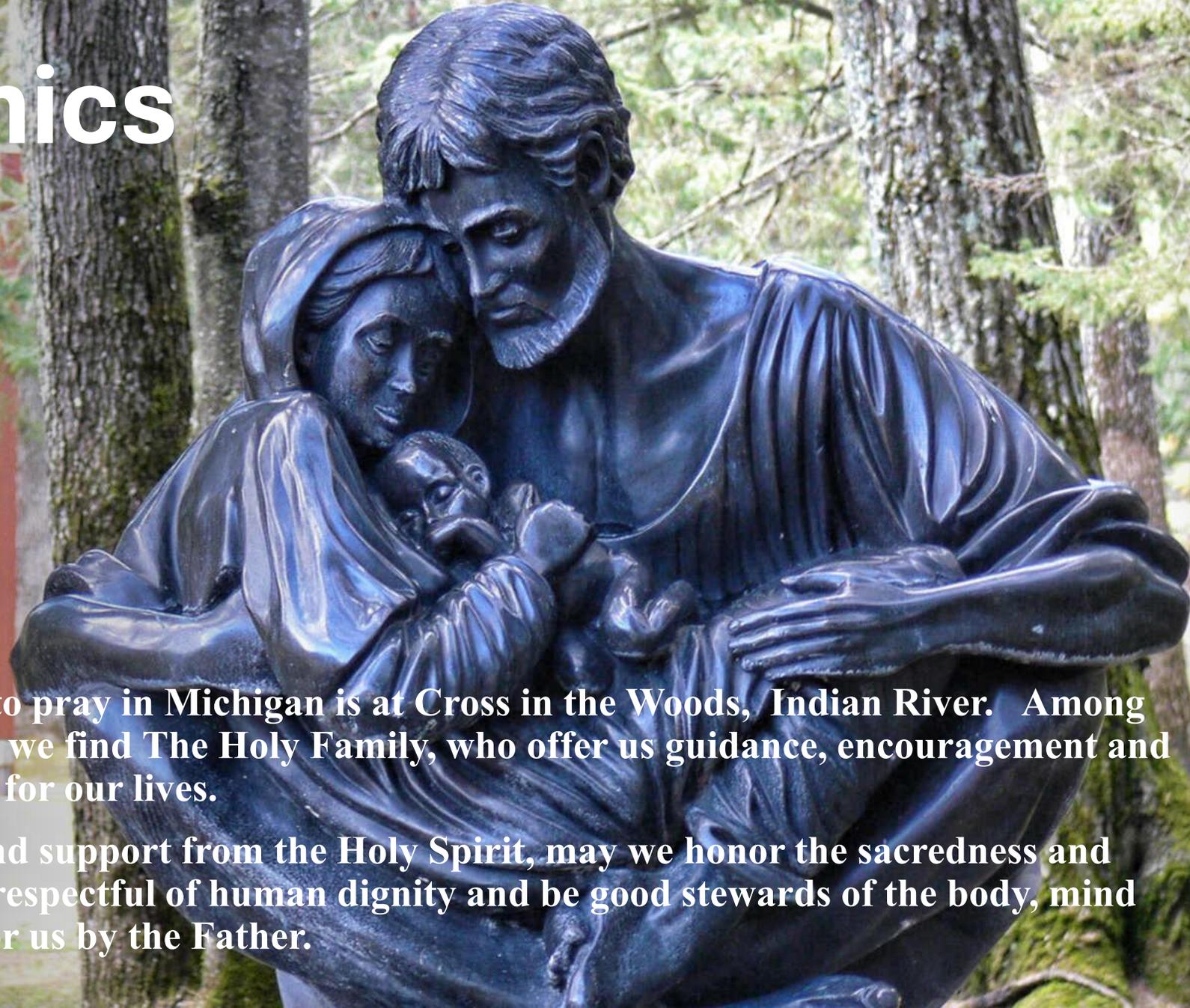


Bioethics

Intro

My favorite place to pray in Michigan is at Cross in the Woods, Indian River. Among the prayer stations we find The Holy Family, who offer us guidance, encouragement and examples to follow for our lives.

Through prayer and support from the Holy Spirit, may we honor the sacredness and sanctity of life, be respectful of human dignity and be good stewards of the body, mind and soul created for us by the Father.

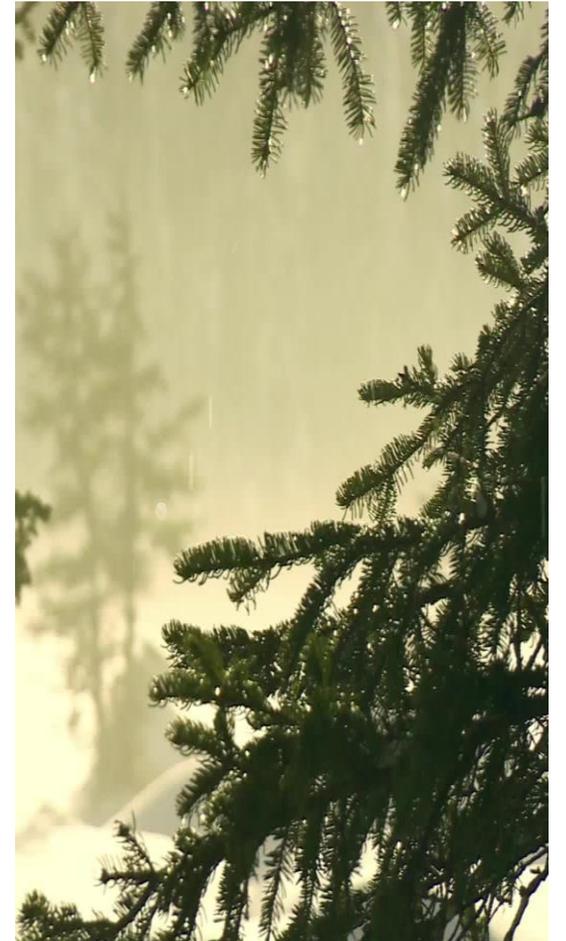


Bioethics

- **The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) views bioethics through the lens of the sanctity of human life and inherent dignity, seeing life as a gift from God, not ours to dispose of, with guiding principles against abortion, euthanasia, and cloning, while supporting responsible stewardship of health, distinguishing ordinary (required) from extraordinary (optional) medical care, and emphasizing that reproductive technologies must serve the marital act, not replace it.**

Core Principles

- **Sanctity of Life**: Every human life is sacred from conception to natural death, a fundamental gift from God.
- **Human Dignity**: The foundation of all morality; persons are more important than things, and institutions must enhance, not threaten, life.
- **Stewardship**: We are stewards, not owners, of life, obligated to preserve it for God's honor.



Sanctity of Life

The Magisterium teaches, “From the moment of conception, the life of every human being is to be respected in an absolute way ... the spiritual soul of each man is ‘immediately created by God; his whole being bears the image of the creator’”.

The Encyclical *Donum vitae* states, “The human body must be respected - as a person – from the very first instant of his existence”.

Our lives are not our own, as they belong to God. Our duty is to be good stewards, custodians of this precious gift of life that has been sacredly entrusted to us. We are accountable to God throughout our lives to be loving, caring and supporting one another with the charisms and talents bestowed upon us. Any decisions made on our part to violate God’s natural laws would be a grave and moral injustice to ourselves, our families, those around us, and to the Father.

Human Dignity

- **Donum vitae states, “The child has the right to be conceived, carried in the womb, brought into the world, and be brought up within marriage. The child is living image of their (parents) love, the permanent sign of their conjugal union, and the living and indissoluble concrete expression of their paternity and maternity”.**
- **Any other means of artificial fertilization or insemination violates the rights of the child, the dignity of the child and holiness of marriage. Anything artificial in this regard violates natural and moral laws, eroding the values we hold near and dear to the sanctity of human life.**
- **The Church recognizes infertility may occur in marriages, but a child is not a right, object or considered something to be owned; it is a ‘Supreme Gift’ from God.**



Week 8



Week 16



Week 28



The tradition of the Church has always held that human life must be protected and favored from the beginning, just as at the various stages of development.

Our Catechism states, “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...no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being”.

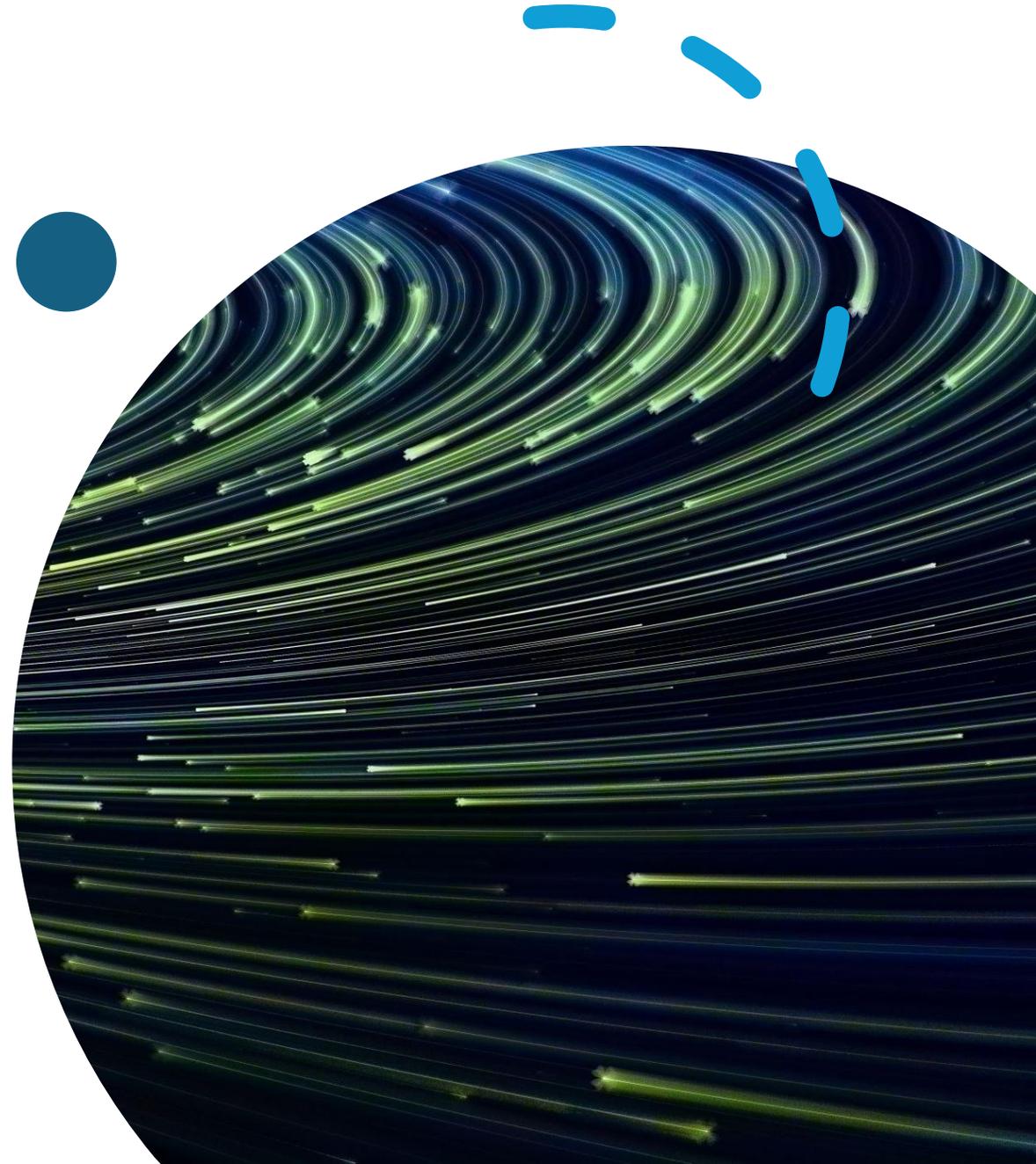


Here are some statistics to consider: In 2023 there were 31,241 induced abortions in Michigan. 91% were Michigan residents, 86.8% were unmarried and 34.2% under age 25.

God's will vs. Human Desire

IVF procedures disregard creation from marital acts; with potentially illicit collection of sperm and degradation of the ova in the process. At times collecting and killing embryos that create life. The life of an unborn child should never begin in a petri dish. Children are not a commodity.

Dr. William May advocates, "The proper way to "assist" the conjugal act...is to discover the root causes of female/male infertility and cure these underlying pathologies...current recourse does not cure but rather responds to human desire".



Contraceptives – Human Desire vs. God’s Will

- Contraceptives are very relevant to the respect for human life, living our faith, as well as having physical and mental ramifications for married couples. In comparison of married couples using contraceptives to couples who practice rhythm of the cycle; the former use contraceptives to prevent having a child, one unwanted at the time, while the latter may have a ‘surprise’ child, but not one unwanted.
- The Catholic Church has always considered contraceptive sterilization always gravely immoral. It is an act of mutilation and regarded as most severe, compared to other forms of contraception. It is considered a grave sin because it was freely chosen.
- John Paul, in explaining contraceptives, describes an act of contraception is precisely to impede the beginning of a new human life or to impede procreation. It is done specifically and deliberately as a conscious choice, a separate act from the conjugal act, impeding a new human life, an act of anti-life.

Defining Euthanasia

The Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith gives the following definition in its 1980 “Declaration on Euthanasia.”

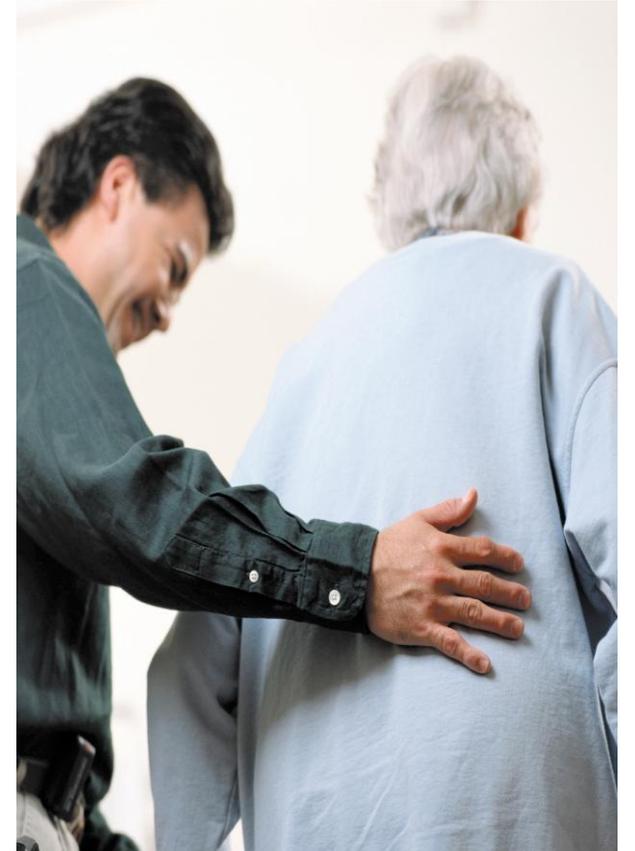
- Euthanasia is understood as an action or an omission which of itself or by intention causes death, in order that all suffering may be eliminated ... for it is a question of the violation of the divine law, an offense against the dignity of the human person, a crime against life, and an attack on humanity.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church provides a similar definition:

- Euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of the handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable. Thus, an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator.

Euthanasia controversy

Author Kenneth Baker relates to us, “The anti-life crowd tells us we have no right to “impose our own morality” on the rest of the nation, but those very same people have no qualms of conscious about imposing their morality on us.” Eroding moral values cause relational values to diminish, increases individualism, pits people in secular competition with one another, as the personal drive for success and happiness of the person outpace concerns for the needs of the common good and the whole of mankind. **God, the Church, and long-standing Christian beliefs are considered indifferent and unwanted by those seeking personal approval in the secular world, with no consideration for salvation. Some people fail to realize there is only permanent joy and total contentment found in relationship with Christ.**



Catholic Teaching - Euthanasia

- Proponents use ‘soft language’, differentiating “personal” life from “biological” life – once a person no longer has visual awareness or common motor skills, they are viewed as having a life not worth living, or better off dead. Some say if you no longer work and don’t contribute to society, death is the answer, so one doesn’t ‘drag’ on the economy for the betterment of others.
- St. John Paul II, in his encyclical *The Gospel of Life*, states, “All this is aggravated by a culture climate which fails to perceive any meaning or value in suffering, but rather considers suffering the epitome of evil, to be eliminated at all costs”.
- St. John Paul II, in caring for patients in a permanent vegetative state, emphasizes the dignity of all men and women, including their basic right to health care, nutrition (natural and/or artificial), hydration, cleanliness, warmth, and the proper level of rehabilitation necessary to their condition.

First birth control, now death control

Pope Benedict XVI says, “The true measure of humanity is essentially determined in relationship to suffering and the sufferer. A society unable to accept its suffering members and incapable of helping to share their suffering and to bear it inwardly through ‘com’ passion is a cruel and inhuman society”. As a society, we need to find solutions to help those dying live a fuller life until their natural death.

In our recent Diocesan newsletter, Bishop Boyea tells us more states are adopting assisted-suicide laws, contrary to our faith: “This past year Illinois passed a bill legalizing assisted suicide in their state. A similar proposal is making its way through the Michigan legislature. It is important that we prepare ourselves to make a firm defense of the dignity of human life from conception to natural death”.

Euthanasia – the need for a balanced care team.



In this life on earth, sin has been introduced, multiplied, and made harder to bear suffering and death.

But in taking on their burden upon Himself, Jesus Christ has transformed them: for whoever believes in Him, suffering and death itself become instruments of resurrection.

St. Paul says, “I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us”.

“Yes, the troubles which are soon over, though they weigh little, train us for the carrying of a weight of eternal glory which is out of all proportion to them”.

Most importantly, for those near the end of their natural life, is to work with a team of medical professionals...to include doctors, clergy, therapists and decision-makers for families to fully allow a terminal person the opportunity to live life to their fullest extent possible before their natural death. If the patient is not competent to make their final care decisions, children make the decisions; which sometimes may not in the best interest of the patient, but that of the children. They may not honor the deep faith the patient held, have a deep faith themselves and considering any level of suffering as intolerable and trigger to end the patient's life.

Catholic Health Care Providers

- The sixth edition of the Ethical and Religious Directives (ERD) for Catholic Health Care Services, developed by the United States Conference of Bishops (USCCB), outlines for us their directives, in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, guidelines and practices aligned with the mission of Jesus, in holistically caring for the sanctity and dignity of all human life within their communities.
- With the many new medical advancements, technological breakthroughs and an ever-changing social environment, **its crucial these influences work together with Catholic health care to respect the moral norms and together provide for the common good, without conflicting with God's natural laws.** Working together, they can provide valuable stewardship and advancement of care, within the Church's moral commitment to man and God.





United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

The seventh edition of the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services was developed by the USCCB in November 2025.

https://www.usccb.org/resources/ERDs-7th-ed-Approved_2025-11-12.pdf. The edition is not yet in print form, but issues updated guidance on the social responsibilities of Catholic Health Care systems for the beginning of life, the sanctity of all life, especially those ill and dying.

In part, they emphasize Catholic health workers cannot provide services that may alter the fundamental order of the human body; whether done through genetics, hormones or surgery.

Gender Ideology

- Pope Pius states, “Because he (man) is a user and not a proprietor, he does not have unlimited power to destroy or mutilate his body and its functions”. Cardinal Sarah builds upon this work with his discussion on gender theory and ideology. It’s contrary to our dignity and that of God to be born with a sexual identity and reject it. Rejecting our nature is a rejection of God...we must rediscover the fact that our own nature is not an enemy or a prison”.
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church states (2333): Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life.

Direction of Health Care / Practices

- Just as it was for Jesus to heal us in our entirety, mind, body, and spirit; so, it is in our Catholic health care community, to heal those afflicted and care for them physically, mentally, and spiritually. St. Paul says, “For those in Christ, suffering and death are the birth pangs of the new creation.”
- Pope John Paul II in his exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* writes, “At the root of this loss of hope is an attempt to promote a vision of man apart from God and apart from Christ”. This sort of thinking has led to man being considered as “the absolute center of reality, a view that makes him occupy – falsely – the place of God and which forgets that it is not man that creates God, but rather God who creates man. Forgetfulness of God led to the abandonment of man”.
- The task of medicine is to care even when it cannot cure. Even those in a persistent vegetative state and helpless deserve proportionate care and full dignity as a child of God.
- Patients should always be kept as pain free as they desire, not to be deprived of consciousness and in the place or location where they wish to die, with dignity and God’s grace.
- Medicines to alleviate pain may be given to a dying person, even if it may indirectly shorten their life, if the intent of the medicine is not to hasten one’s death.



In Conclusion:

- God made man in His own image, clearly elevating man above all created creatures. Any attempt by man to reduce the value of a human being to a common denominator, especially the most vulnerable, morally corrupts society. May tells us, “When human autonomy is conceived as the arbiter of good and evil, or right and wrong, we are no longer able to guide our choices by the truth but only by subjective and changing human opinions.”
- As a community, Cardinal Sarah implores us to accept our ‘creaturely nature’ and again turn our lives to God as the world has chosen to live without Him. Against all odds, he encourages the sick, the lowly, the disabled, while quoting then Cardinal Ratzinger, “In this way the light of the divine love lies specifically upon suffering people in whom the splendor of the creation has been externally dimmed...they have drawn near to a special shared nature with him”.
- With heartfelt mercy and grace, Cardinal Sarah adds, “The Church prolongs the mission of Christ, who wants to lead man to perfection, to his divinization: Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God; consider the outcome of their life and imitate their faith.

Prayer to the Holy Family

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendor of true love, to you we turn with trust. Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic Churches. Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division: may all who have been hurt or scandalized find ready comfort and healing. Holy Family of Nazareth, may we once more be mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, graciously hear our prayer.

Amen



A Prayer to the Creator (by Pope Francis from Fratelli Tutti)

Lord, Father of our human family,
you created all human beings equal in dignity:
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,
dialogue, justice and peace.
Move us to create healthier societies
and a more dignified world,
a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.
May our hearts be open
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.
May we recognize the goodness and beauty
that you have sown in each of us,
and thus, forge bonds of unity, common projects, and
shared dreams.
Amen.

Prayer for Protection of Conscience Rights in Health Care

Father, in Jesus our Lord, we praise and thank you for your most precious gift of human life and for forming us in your divine image.

Keep us, the dwelling place of your most Holy Spirit, ever healthy in body and soul.

Jesus, Divine Healer, pour your grace upon all those afflicted with illness or disease. Protect from all harm those who are vulnerable due to sickness, suffering, frailty, poverty or age, whether elderly or unborn.

Holy Spirit, touch the hearts of all who serve human life in medicine and science, so they will protect the dignity of each person, from conception to natural death and remain faithful advocates of all entrusted to their care.

Grant those who are called to serve as health care providers renewed conviction in their ministry, and increased wisdom to treat the whole person, and not merely the illness.

Protect the right of health care providers to serve their patients without being forced to violate their moral and religious convictions.

Guard them against discrimination, that they might be free to follow you faithfully while fulfilling their professional duties.

Grant our lawmakers the wisdom and courage to uphold conscience rights for those called to the ministry of healing and help them resist the pressure to become collaborators in the culture of death. Give us strength to be bold and joyful witnesses to the truth that every human life is sacred.

In your goodness, guard our freedom to live out our faith and to follow you in all that we do. Father, we ask this in Jesus' name, through the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Scripture references:

[Leviticus 18:24](#) Do not defile yourselves by any of these things by which the nations whom I am driving out of your way have defiled themselves.

[Leviticus 19:28](#) Do not lacerate your bodies for the dead, and do not tattoo yourselves, I am the Lord.

[Romans 12:1](#) I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good, pleasing and perfect.

[1 Corinthians 3: 16-17](#) Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for the temple of God, which you are, is holy.

[1 Corinthians 6: 19-20](#) Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body.



Scripture references:

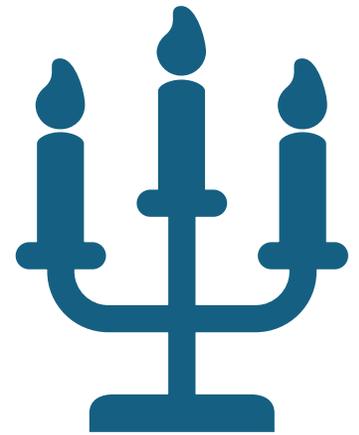
[1 Corinthians 10: 31](#) So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.

[1 Thessalonians 5: 8-9; 23](#) But since we are of the day, let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet that is hope for salvation. For God did not destine us for wrath, but to gain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ...may the God of peace himself make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Proverbs 24:19-22](#) Hear, my son, and be wise, and guide your heart in the right way. Consort not with winebibbers, nor with those who eat meat in excess; for the drunkard and glutton come to poverty, and torpor clothes a man in rags. Listen to your father who begot you and despise not your mother when she is old.

[Ephesians 5:18](#) Do not get drunk with wine, in which lies debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.

[Galatians 5:16-17](#) I say, then: live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desires of the flesh, for the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want.





Study Questions...

Please review these questions for five minutes, then we can discuss.

- 1. What two things surprised you the most from the information presented today?**
- 2. It can be difficult at times to follow our faith...identify two areas you find challenging from the material we reviewed.**