

Selected Quotes from Church Documents: On the Importance and Priority of Defending Innocent Human Life

Papal Teaching

The inviolability of the person which is a reflection of the absolute inviolability of God, finds its primary and fundamental expression in the *inviolability of human life*. Above all, the common outcry, which is justly made on behalf of human rights—for example, the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture— is false and illusory if *the right to life*, the most basic and fundamental right and the condition for all other personal rights, is not defended with maximum determination.

Pope John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* (1988), no. 38

-It is impossible to further the common good without acknowledging and defending the right to life, upon which all the other inalienable rights of individuals are founded and from which they develop. A society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized. Only respect for life can be the foundation and guarantee of the most precious and essential goods of society, such as democracy and peace.

Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* (1995), no. 101

Vatican Documents

The first right of the human person is his life. He has other goods and some are more precious, but this one is fundamental - the condition of all the others. Hence it must be protected above all others. It does not belong to society, nor does it belong to public authority in any form to recognize this right for some and not for others: all discrimination is evil, whether it be founded on race, sex, color or religion. It is not recognition by another that constitutes this right. This right is antecedent to its recognition; it demands recognition and it is strictly unjust to refuse it.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration on Procured Abortion* (1974), no. 11

U.S. Bishops' Documents

At this particular time, abortion has become the fundamental human rights issue for all men and women of good will. For us abortion is of overriding concern because it negates two of our most fundamental moral imperatives: respect for innocent life, and preferential concern for the weak and defenseless.

[Resolution on Abortion \(1989\)](#)

Among important issues involving the dignity of human life with which the Church is concerned, abortion necessarily plays a central role. Abortion, the direct killing of an innocent human being, is *always* gravely immoral (*The Gospel of Life*, no. 57); its victims are the most vulnerable and

defenseless members of the human family. It is imperative that those who are called to serve the least among us give urgent attention and priority to this issue of justice.

[Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign in Support of Life \(2001\), Introduction](#)

[A]bortion and euthanasia have become preeminent threats to human dignity because they directly attack life itself, the most fundamental human good and the condition for all others.