

BE NOT AFRAID

Respect for Life

by Bishop John M. LeVoir

October is Respect Life Month. As the program for this month, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has determined the following themes: Abortion, Death Penalty, Persons with Disabilities, Reproductive Technologies, Embryo Research, Marriage, Euthanasia, and Contraception. The following quotes are given to illustrate the Church's teaching on these subjects.

Abortion. Blessed John Paul wrote: "Each human being is unique, unrepeatable, and infinitely precious to God. In becoming man and by his death on the cross, Jesus showed us the incomparable value of each human life, making his human life the instrument of the salvation of all humanity!" (*The Gospel of Life*, no. 33).

Abortion is: "The deliberate and direct killing, by whatever means it is carried out, of a human being in the initial phase of his or her existence, extending from conception to birth . . . Among all the crimes which can be committed against life, procured abortion has characteristics making it particularly serious and deplorable" (*The Gospel of Life*, no. 58).

Death Penalty. Blessed John Paul wrote: "The nature and extent of the punishment must be carefully evaluated and decided upon, and ought not go to the extreme of executing the offender except in cases of absolute necessity: in other words, when it would not be possible otherwise to defend society. Today however, as a result of steady improvements in the organization of the penal system, such cases are very rare, if not practically non-existent" (*The Gospel of Life*, no. 56).

Persons with Disabilities. "Every human person – no matter how vulnerable or helpless, . . . no matter how healthy, handicapped, or sick, no matter how useful or productive for society – is a being of inestimable worth created in the image and likeness of God" (Homily, September 19, 1987).

Reproductive Technologies and Embryo Research. "In reality, the origin of a human person is the result of an act of giving. The one conceived must be the fruit of his parents' love. He cannot be desired or conceived as the product of an intervention of medical or biological techniques; that would be equivalent to reducing him to an object of scientific technology. No one may subject the coming of a child into the world to conditions of technical efficiency which are to be evaluated according to standards of control and dominion" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum Vitae*, II.B.4.c).

Marriage. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that marriage is: "A covenant or partnership of life between a man and woman, which is ordered to the well-being of the spouses

and to the procreation and upbringing of children. When validly contracted between two baptized people, marriage is a sacrament” (Glossary).

Euthanasia. “True ‘compassion’ leads to sharing another’s pain; it does not kill the person whose suffering we cannot bear” (Blessed John Paul, *The Gospel of Life*, no. 66).

Contraception. Blessed John Paul wrote: “Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality” (*The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*, no. 32).

Marriage

Minnesota will have a marriage amendment on the ballot in the fall of 2012 defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Consequently, there will be much discussion in the coming months about marriage and sexuality. It is important that the teaching of the Catholic Church be heard in this discussion. The Minnesota bishops, through the Minnesota Catholic Conference (MCC), will be bringing this voice into the public square. It is important that the laity do their part as well to make this teaching known, keeping in mind that the truth should always be spoken with love. (For the latest information on the Marriage Amendment, see the MCC Web site).

What is marriage? In his apostolic exhortation *The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*, Blessed John Paul II writes that marriage is a “covenant of conjugal love freely and consciously chosen, whereby man and woman accept the intimate community of life and love willed by God himself” (no. 11). There is a special love required for marriage. It is different from the love between friends, or between parent and child, or between us and God. It is called marital love and is characterized by a man and a woman who give themselves to one another in faithfulness, permanence, and openness to the begetting and raising of children.

Marital love is expressed in a profound way through the sexual embrace. Blessed John Paul defines sexuality as the means by which “man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses” (no. 11). He goes on to write that sexuality “is by no means something purely biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such” (no. 11). Sexuality is the means by which a man and a woman give their hearts to one another as an expression of the faithful, permanent, and life-giving love that they have for one another.

Politics

The USCCB is concerned with legislation and policies that impact church-state relations. In particular, the USCCB has an interest in legislation that protects religious freedom, limits government intrusion into religious matters, and allows for reasonable collaboration between public and religious entities. The USCCB carefully monitors any legislation or policies dealing with the regulation of tax exempt entities. Legislation which creates incentives for charitable

giving and public assistance for programs carried out by church-related entities are also of particular interest to the USCCB.

Recently the Catholic bishops have expressed concern over the government's non-enforcement of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Also, concern has been expressed about the government's role in helping to reduce poverty and to advocate for the poor and those without jobs; the just treatment of immigrants; the protection of the conscience rights of health care workers; and the protection of religious freedom (e.g., the government's Health and Human Services "preventive services" mandate requiring private health plans to cover female surgical sterilization and all drugs and devices approved by the FDA as contraceptives, including drugs which can attack a developing unborn child before and after implantation in the mother's womb). It is good to check regularly the USCCB Web site for the latest Church teaching on public issues.

Oct. 2011

No Tengas Miedo

Respeto a la Vida

por Obispo John M. LeVoir

Octubre es el mes de Respeto a la Vida. La Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos ha determinado los siguientes temas:

Aborción. Beato Juan Pablo II escribió: "Cada ser humano es único, irrepetible, e infinitamente bello en los ojos de Dios. ¡Cuando se hizo hombre y por su muerte en la cruz, Jesús nos mostró el valor incomparable de cada ser humano, haciendo su vida humana el instrument de la salvación de toda la humanidad!" (The Gospel of Life, no. 33).

Aborción es: "La eliminación deliberada y directa, como quiera que se realice, de un ser humano en la fase inicial de su existencia, que va de la concepción al nacimiento . . . entre todos los delitos que el hombre puede cometer contra la vida, el aborto procurado presenta características que lo hacen particularmente grave e ignominioso" ("The Gospel of Life," no. 58).

Pena de Muerte. Beato Juan Pablo II escribió: "Es evidente que, precisamente para conseguir todas estas finalidades, la medida y la calidad de la pena ser valoradas y decididas atentamente, sin que se deba llegar a la medida extrema de la eliminación del reo salvo en casos de absoluta necesidad, es decir, cuando la defensa de la sociedad no sea posible de otro modo. Hoy, sin embargo, gracias a la organización cada vez más adecuada de la institución penal, estos casos son ya muy raros, por no decir prácticamente inexistentes" ("The Gospel of Life," no. 56).

Personas con Disabilidades. "Cada ser humano - sin importar que tan vulnerable sea, ...que tan saludable sea, discapacitada, o enferma, que tan útil o productivo sea a la sociedad - es un ser digno creado a imagen y semejanza de Dios." (Homily, Sept. 19, 1987).

Tecnología Reproductiva y la Investigación de Embriones. “El origen de una persona humana es en realidad el resultado de una donación. La persona concebida deberá ser el fruto del amor de sus padres. No puede ser querida ni concebida como el producto de una intervención de técnicas médicas y biológicas: esto equivaldría a reducirlo a ser objeto de una tecnología científica. Nadie puede subordinar la llegada al mundo de un niño a las condiciones de eficiencia técnica medibles según parámetros de control y de dominio” (Congregación para la doctrina de la fe, “Donum Vitae, II.B.4.c”).

Matrimonio. “El Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica dice que el matrimonio es: “La alianza matrimonial, por la que el varón y la mujer constituyen entre sí un consorcio de toda la vida, ordenado por su misma índole natural al bien de los cónyuges y a la generación y educación de la prole, fue elevada por Cristo Nuestro Señor a la dignidad de sacramento entre bautizados” (glossary).

Eutanasia. “La verdadera ‘compasión’ hace solidarios con el dolor de los demás, y no elimina a la persona cuyo sufrimiento no se puede soportar” (Blessed John Paul, “The Gospel of Life,” no. 66).

Contracepción. Beato Juan Pablo II escribió: “Así, al lenguaje natural que expresa la recíproca donación total de los esposos, el anticoncepcionismo impone un lenguaje objetivamente contradictorio, es decir, el de no darse al otro totalmente: se produce, no sólo el rechazo positivo de la apertura a la vida, sino también una falsificación de la verdad interior del amor conyugal, llamado a entregarse en plenitud personal” (“The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World,” no. 32).

El Matrimonio

Minnesota tendrá una enmienda sobre el matrimonio en las elecciones en el 2012 para definir al matrimonio como la unión entre un hombre y una mujer. Por lo tanto, en los próximos meses se hablará mucho sobre el matrimonio y la sexualidad. Es importante que la enseñanza católica se escuche en estos debates. Los obispos de Minnesota, a través de la Conferencia Católica de Minnesota se hará oír su voz en la plaza pública. Es importante que los laicos pongan de su parte y hagan conocer sus enseñanzas, teniendo en cuenta que la verdad siempre se debe hablar con amor. (Para mayor información sobre la enmienda ir a la página de internet del MCC).

¿Qué es el matrimonio? The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World Beato Juan Pablo II escribe que el matrimonio es “el pacto de amor conyugal o elección consciente y libre, con la que el hombre y la mujer aceptan la comunidad íntima de vida y amor, querida por Dios mismo” (no. 11). En el matrimonio se requiere un amor especial. El amor es diferente que uno le tiene al amigo, entre un padre a su hijo, o entre nosotros a Dios. Se llama amor conyugal y se caracteriza por el amor que se dan entre el varón y la mujer en fidelidad, estabilidad, y abierto a la procreación y la crianza de los hijos.

El amor conyugal se expresa de manera profunda a través de la relación sexual. Beato Juan Pablo II define a la sexualidad como el medio por el cual “el hombre y la mujer se dan el uno al otro a través de actos propios y exclusivos de esposos” luego continúa “no es algo puramente biológico, sino que afecta al núcleo íntimo de la persona humana en cuanto tal. (no. 11). La sexualidad por la cual el varón y la mujer dan su corazón como expresión del amor que se tienen.

