

PERSONHOOD: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Each one of us has tremendous dignity because each of us is created in the image of God. We are more than a mass of cells reacting to environmental stimuli.

OVERVIEW

Each one of us has tremendous dignity because each of us is created in the image of God. We are more than a mass of cells reacting to environmental stimuli. We are more than what we can see – more than skin, teeth and muscles. We are children of God created to love one another. We learn through the Gospel, and specifically the Ten Commandments that our identity is formed by our relationship with God and with one another. In the Gospel, Jesus uses the Beatitudes to teach what qualities we should embody in our relationships.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The Beatitudes express the vocation of the faithful, they are a framework for living a God filled life.

- Which beatitude do you identify with most strongly?
- Which of the beatitudes do you find most challenging?

A foundation for Catholic social thought is understanding the value and dignity of the human person.

- How do we demonstrate that we value others?
- In what ways does society violate the sanctity of human life?
- How do we balance respect for the individual with respect for the common good?

God has given us a conscience, a barometer revealing the moral rightness of our decision making. Our actions give voice to our conscience, to doing the right thing for ourselves and others.

- How do we know that we are doing the right thing?
- What guidance do we have to show us what is right in the eyes of God?
- How do we develop our conscience?
- Is it possible for someone to have no conscience?

We are familiar with the phrase, “If you want peace, work for justice.”

- How does peace come from justice?
- What is justice in terms of respecting the dignity of the human person?
- Is justice the same as fairness?

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In the words of St. Francis, "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." Personal responsibility is intrinsic for respecting self in order to respect others. We individuals are part of a greater community of people, the Body of Christ. As unique individuals, created in the image and likeness of God, we are morally bound to respect the life of others – human rights – to care for and protect one another in all stages and forms of life.

- Who do we know that needs our help?
- How have we helped them?
- What is gained by helping the poor, the sick, the imprisoned, the young, the old?
- What is lost if we don't help and protect?

When love is unselfish it creates openness in our hearts to nurture and offer true love for others. Letting go of self-interest allows us to see another person as our brother and sister deserving of respect and mercy.

- Discuss an experience where you were shown mercy from another person.
- When have you show mercy to another?

Dorothy Day once said that "it is most surely an exercise of faith for us to see Christ in each other."

- What challenges are there to seeing Christ in others?
- What gives people their dignity?
- What does the teaching that we are all created in the image and likeness of God mean to you?
- What implications does this teaching have for the way we live our lives?
- How can we use this teaching to live out our lives as faithful disciples and members of the human family?
- What is more important, the person or society?

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SUNDAY MASS HOMILY POINTS - CYCLE C

Baptism of the Lord

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

- Human dignity is rooted in the reality that all human beings are made in the likeness and image of God. God is indeed "well pleased" in making us his sons and daughters for he gave us his Spirit to sustain us and give us life. Through the Spirit of adoption we can call God "Father," which is "Abba." Knowing who we are and *whose* we are teaches us to reverence the sanctity of all human life in all stages and conditions.

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jer 1:4-5, 17-19: "The word of the Lord came to me, saying: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born, I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you."

- God's plan is constantly unfolding. We can take heart in knowing that God calls each of us by name and has a desire for us to fulfill His purpose. Being open to that purpose in every person and trusting in God's plan is a part of our own witness to the marvels of God

Fourth Sunday of Easter

John 10:27-30: "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand."

- God made us for eternity. All of humanity is called to recognize the inherent dignity of every human person.

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MEDIA RESOURCES FROM THE BISHOP GRADY MEMORIAL LIBRARY

To reserve resources from the Bishop Grady Memorial Library, contact BGML@orlandodiocese.org, call 407-246-4895, or visit the website at: www.orlandodiocese.org/ministries-offices/bishop-grady-memorial-library

DVD-0765	Bernardin
DVD-0451	China Blue
DVD-0633	Invisible Chains
DVD-0444	Live from the Womb-Baby Steps
DVD-0605	Biology of Prenatal Development
DVD-0411	Turning the Tide: Dignity, Compassion and Euthanasia
DVD-040	When Did I See You Hungry?
DVD-0515	The Heart Has Its Reasons
DVD-0767	Room at the Inn
DVD-0788	Caring for a Loved One with Alzheimer's

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SAINTS AND PRAYERS

St. Catherine of Bologna (patron saint of artists) Feast day: March 9

Catherine of Bologna was a Poor Clare and mystical writer, born at Bologna, September 8, 1413 and died there, March 9, 1463. When she was ten years old, her father sent her to the court of the Marquis of Ferrara, Nicolo d'Este, as a companion to the Princess Margarita. Here Catherine pursued the study of literature and the fine arts; and a manuscript illuminated by her which once belonged to Pius IX is at present reckoned among the treasures of Oxford. After the marriage of the Princess Margarita to Roberto Malatesta, Prince of Rimini, Catherine returned home, and, determined to join the little company of devout maidens who were living in community and following the rule of the Third Order of St. Augustine in the neighboring town of Ferrara. Later the community, yielding to the entreaties of Catherine, adopted the Rule of St. Clare, and in 1432 they were clothed with the habit, of the Second Order of St. Francis by the provincial of the Friars Minor.

The increasing number of vocations, however, made it necessary to establish other monasteries of the Poor Clares in Italy, and in pursuance of the Brief of Callistus III, "Ad ea quae in omnipotentis Dei gloriam", convents were founded at Bologna and Cremona. St. Catherine was chosen abbess of the community in her native town, which office she held until her death. The grievous and persistent temptations which in the early days of her religious life had tried her patience, humility, and faith, especially the latter virtue, gave place in later years to the most abundant spiritual consolation, and enjoyment of the heights of contemplation. A large part of St. Catherine's counsels and instructions on the spiritual life are to be found in her "Treatise on the Seven Spiritual Weapons", which contains, besides, an account of the saint's own struggles in the path of perfection, and which she composed with the aid of her confessor shortly before her death. The body of St. Catherine, which remains incorrupt, is preserved in the chapel of the Poor Clares at Bologna. St. Catherine was canonized by Pope Benedict XIII. Her feast is kept on the 9th of March throughout the Order of Friars Minor.

St. Vincent de Paul (patron of charitable societies) Feast day: September 27

St. Vincent was born of poor parents in the village of Pouy in Gascony, France, about 1580. He enjoyed his first schooling under the Franciscan Fathers at Acqs. Such had been his progress in four years that a gentleman chose him as subpreceptor to his children, and he was thus enabled to continue his studies without being a burden to his parents. In 1596, he went to the University of Toulouse for theological studies, and there he was ordained priest in 1600. In 1605, on a voyage by sea from Marseilles to Narbonne, he fell into the hands of African pirates and was carried as a slave to Tunis. His captivity lasted about two years, until Divine Providence enabled him to effect his escape. After a brief visit to Rome he returned to France, where he became preceptor in the family of Emmanuel de Gondy, Count of Goigny, and General of the galleys of France. In 1617, he began to preach missions, and in 1625, he lay the foundations of a congregation which afterward became the Congregation of the Mission or Lazarists, so named on account of the Priory of St. Lazarus, which the Fathers began to occupy in 1633.



It would be impossible to enumerate all the works of this servant of God. Charity was his predominant virtue. It extended to all classes of persons, from forsaken childhood to old age. The Sisters of Charity also owe the foundation of their congregation to St. Vincent. In the midst of the most distracting occupations his soul was always intimately united with God. Though honored by the great ones of the world, he remained deeply rooted in humility. The Apostle of Charity, the immortal Vincent de Paul, breathed his last in Paris at the age of eighty.

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SAINTS AND PRAYERS

O my Jesus, Thou who art very Love,
enkindle in my heart that Divine Fire
which consumes the Saints and transforms them into Thee.
O Lord our God,
we offer Thee our hearts
united in the strongest and most sincere love of brotherhood;
we pray that Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament
may be the daily food of our souls and bodies;
that Jesus may be established as the center of our affections,
even as He was for Mary and Joseph.
Finally, O Lord, may sin never disturb our union on earth;
and may we be eternally united in heaven with Thee
and Mary and Joseph and with all Thy Saints.
Amen.

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DOCUMENTS AND WEBSITES

USCCB Search for these titles at www.usccb.org.

- Human Life and Dignity, abortion
- Pastoral Plan For Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign In Support Of Life
- Documentation on the Right to Life and Abortion
- Fact Sheet: Respect for Unborn Human Life: The Church's Constant Teaching (also available in Spanish)
- Abortion and Catholic Social Teaching, Rev. Thomas D. Williams, L.C., 2007 (also available in Spanish)
- Abortion and Breast Cancer: The Link That Won't Go Away, Angela Lanfranchi, M.D., 2007 (also available in Spanish)
- Human Life and Dignity
- Strangers No Longer, the Catholic Bishops of the United States and Mexico (also available in Spanish)
- Welcoming the Stranger Among Us (also available in Spanish)
- Justice for Immigrants (also available in Spanish)
- USCCB Immigration
- USCCB Refugee and Migration

Other Resources

Office of Advocacy and Justice, Abortion Resources
www.advocacyjustice.org

Catholic Legal Immigration Network
<https://cliniclegal.org>

Catholic Charities of Central Florida Refugee Services
www.cfcc.org/refugee/home

Vatican Documents Search for these titles at www.vatican.va

Propositions on the Dignity and Rights of the Human Person (also available in Spanish)

Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (also available in Spanish)

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PERSONHOOD: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE: SCRIPT

“The throwaway culture leads to the elimination of human beings, especially those who are physically and socially weakest. Our response to this mentality is a 'yes' to life, decisive and without hesitation. The first right of the human person is his life.” – Pope Francis

*“God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”
– Genesis 1:27*

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He calls us to be “blessed” by choosing lifestyles that benefit others and are not based on selfishness, to be sensitive and compassionate to those in pain, to be gentle, forgiving, modest, peaceful, respectful, and courageous in our path of discipleship.

This reality stands in direct contrast to the way some people and some governments treat individuals as objects: human trafficking, certain reproductive technologies, abuse, abortion, the death penalty, sweat shops, euthanasia are all harmful to the human person because they violate the inherent dignity of each person.

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”
Mark 12:30-31*

God has given each of us a conscience that reveals the order or natural law which is encoded in each of us. It is not just a physical order that we can sense through scientific methods, but a moral order that is imprinted in each one of our hearts. It is through a genuine love of self and others that we come to an awareness of our unique worth and that of others.

We learn that we are called to care for and be responsible for each person whatever their stage of life: the unborn, the human embryo, the person with a disability, the abandoned, the elderly, the poor and destitute.

“In life, God accompanies persons, and we must accompany them, starting from their situation. It is necessary to accompany them with mercy.” – Pope Francis

God has a plan for each and every person and it is our responsibility to be there for each other and help our brothers and sisters recognize their own dignity.

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” – Luke 6:31

For each human person, the fullness of life is reached in their relationship to God and to each other. We learn about relationships by the commandment to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. Treating others as we would want to be treated should be at the heart of all relationships and treatment of human life. Only in realizing that we are temples of the Holy Spirit and treating others in the same way, does each of us satisfy that deep longing for fulfillment.