

INTRODUCTION - *REVERENCE FOR LIFE: THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE - NOVEMBER, 1999*

The year 1991 commemorated the centennial of Catholic social teaching. This body of thought, as well as a call to action, represents the Church's commitment to the pursuit of social justice. It evolved in response to the pressing issues brought to pass by the rapidly changing conditions of the modern world.

The Church's social teaching is not limited to questions touching upon economic and political rights. It has also been concerned with human life issues. Abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, and the violence of war fall within the scope of social morality. (1)

We Catholic bishops of Kentucky are issuing this pastoral letter to address the fundamental human rights issue of our day --- the right to life of the unborn. We view the current policy of abortion on demand as a national scandal which strikes at the heart of our civilization.

In approaching the topic of the right to life of the unborn, we will correlate the protection of the unborn with a consistent ethic of life. To defend the right to life of the unborn entails being concerned with the quality of life. The legally sanctioned taking of the lives of the most vulnerable human beings in our midst erodes respect for all human life. A society that fails to stand on the side of life plants the seeds of its own destruction.

When the democratic idea of safeguarding the dignity of every human person is betrayed in the killing of the weakest and most innocent, the result is twofold: in the process of breaking down human solidarity, the "disintegration of the State itself has already begun." (EV n. 20) The violation of the most fundamental right -- the right to life -- can "lull the social conscience in ways ultimately destructive of other human rights." (LGL n. 23)

To the Catholic People of Kentucky

THE CHURCH'S ROLE ON PUBLIC MORAL ISSUES

Opposition to abortion is not a specifically Roman Catholic belief. As a matter of fact, this conviction is shared by many of other faiths. Even those without any specific religious outlook defend the right to life on the basis of their sense of reverence for human life and of the intrinsic value of each person.

The sanctity of human life is "not merely a Catholic doctrine but part of humanity's global heritage and our nation's founding principle." (LGL n. 24) The Church's Gospel of life "has a profound and pervasive echo in the heart of every person -- believer and non-believer alike..." (EV n. 2)

We grant that the deepest insight into our moral convictions is derived from our religious vision. However, values which take their starting point and support from a religious context also embody insights about the human good -- values which promote human flourishing or well-being.

Our religious beliefs affirm basic human rights and obligations that are essential to the fabric of our social life. Respect for human life is numbered among those basic values that undergird the very foundation of civilization. (2)

What we profess in defense of the sacredness of unborn human life is consistent with our legal tradition. Abortion on demand is not consistent.

To advocate the protection of unborn human life is a call to return "to what is best in our common national heritage: human beings, simply because they are human, must be recognized as persons with fundamental rights." (L&S 1997)

The Declaration of Independence lists life as the first of the inalienable rights. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are recognized as universal and inherent rights in each person. They are arbitrarily denied to the unborn who in effect are stripped of any legal protection.

In this regard, the political reality dramatically contradicts our nation's founding principles by eroding the inalienable right to life and denying legal protection to society's most vulnerable. Authentic justice will be absent "until the truths on which our nation was founded are more perfectly realized in our culture and law." (LGL n. 14)

Our founding documents presuppose that policies and laws stand under the judgment of a higher law --- a transcendent judgment expressed in the phrase, "This nation under God." (3)

Consistent with our nation's legal tradition we hold that all human laws must be measured against the natural law engraved in our hearts by the Creator. (4)

The influence of the churches and religious bodies to form consciences, to support and motivate men and women to pursue social justice and to protect civil rights has been recognized as a genuine force in the dynamics of our political life.

The recognition of the legitimate contribution of the churches in the social order is reflected in their involvement in building consensus to reject racism, to overcome poverty, and to subject war to moral scrutiny.

We claim the historical freedom of religious bodies to exercise the freedom of expression to teach social doctrine and "to pass moral judgment in those matters which regard the public order when the fundamental rights of a person or the salvation of souls require it." (5)

The consensus on the substantive moral truths that served as a common foundation for civil law has eroded. It is our hope that the consistent ethic of life can be a step to restoring that common ground for discussion of substantive truths in public dialogue. As a nation we need to recapture the original sense of "We hold these truths." We are persuaded that the consistent ethic of life can serve as a framework for the ongoing moral analysis of our laws and public policies.

THE LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Catholic social teaching is rooted in a single, pivotal truth – the dignity of the human person. It affirms that the human person is both sacred and social. (GS n.12)

Men and women are sacred because they are called into life by God and destined to eternal life with God. Human life is a loving gift of God to be revered because of its divine origin and destiny. (GS n. 19)

Human life is also inherently social. The human person can only achieve fulfillment in and through community. The person is ordered to community; the community, in turn, is ordered to the well-being of the person. Because of this sociality, society has the duty to foster, promote, and to protect human life --- from conception to natural death. (GS n. 12)

For the Christian, the dignity of the human person is based on the doctrines of creation and redemption. In his "Charter of Human Rights," the encyclical Peace on Earth, Pope John XXIII identified human dignity as the foundation of the basic order that structures personal and social existence.

Any human society, if it is to be well-ordered and productive, must lay down as a foundation this principle, namely, that every human being is a person, that is, his nature is endowed with intelligence and free will. Indeed, precisely because he is a person, he has the rights and obligations flowing directly and simultaneously from his very nature. And these rights and obligations are universal and inviolable so that they cannot in any way be surrendered.

If we look upon the dignity of the human person in the light of divinely revealed truth, we cannot help but esteem it far more highly; for men are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, they are by grace the children and friends of God and heirs of eternal glory. (6)

From a theological perspective, Pope John confirmed an insight that was gaining recognition in the consciousness of people everywhere --- the human person is the center and crown of earthly existence. (GS n. 12)

In enumerating those natural and inviolable rights John XXIII placed the very right to life as the bedrock of all other human rights. (PT n. 11)

Pope John Paul II recalled this central teaching during his visit to the United States in 1979:

All human beings ought to value every person for his or her uniqueness as a creature of God, called to be a brother or sister of Christ by reason of the incarnation and universal redemption. (7)

The Holy Father called for strenuous efforts to defend human life "against every influence or action that threatens or weakens it." (8)

The taking of the lives of more than a million unborn children each year in our country is a flagrant disregard for human dignity and the denial of the most basic human right — the right to life. (9)

A "deadly blindness" envelopes the nation "preventing many persons of good will from recognizing the right of innocent human lives to respect, acceptance, and help." (L&S 1997) The legal rationale of privacy and unlimited individualism has not only eroded government's responsibility to protect life but now exonerates infanticide. An alarming and gruesome procedure described as partial birth abortion actually kills a baby in the process of delivery.

"Bad law and defective moral reasoning produce the evasive language to justify evil." (LGL n. 10)

No child should die by abortion. It is beyond comprehension how right thinking people could justify an attack on an unborn child in the very process of delivery, an action clearly bordering on infanticide. (10)

A DOCTRINAL/MORAL OVERVIEW (11)

Reverence for human life is rooted in the belief that God alone is the Lord of life. Each person derives his or her dignity and worth from God who is the transcendent source of life. As creatures, we offer homage to the Author of life by our reverence for all human life.

We are stewards and ministers of life, not masters of life. "Only God is the Master of Life!" (EV n. 55; n. 52)

The biblical command "You shall not kill" (Ex. 20:13) remains integral to a gospel morality. The inviolability of innocent human life "reverberates at the heart of the new 'Ten Words' in the Covenant of Sinai (Ex. 34:28)" and finds refinement in the New Testament's Sermon on the Mount. (EV n. 40) Moreover, "you shall not kill" is integrated with a fuller positive command to love one's neighbor. Jesus, the Gospel of life, has revealed in word and action "the positive requirements of the commandment regarding the inviolability of Life." (EV n. 41; nn. 75-76)

The constant witness of the Church with regard to the immorality of abortion was confirmed in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council – "For God, the Lord of life, has conferred on men the surpassing ministry of safeguarding life in a manner worthy of man. Therefore from the moment of conception life must be guarded with the greatest care, while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes." (GS n. 51; EV n. 31) No human being, no human authority can usurp the divine authority over life and death. The right to life from conception is the constant teaching of the Church. (12)

Since the right to life comes from God, there can be no objective justification for the deliberate destruction of unborn life. (EV n. 58)

Human life must be revered from the moment of conception. At that point there is the beginning of "a process whose purpose is the realization of human personality." (13) The unique life of each human person begins at conception. The dignity of unborn children is rooted "in the objective individuality that inherently tends toward the openness and transcendence men commonly call personhood." (14)

The new and distinct entity created at conception is undeniably human. ...It is human insofar as it originates from human parents. ...It is human insofar as it is alive and endowed with a distinctive human genetic code. ...That genetic code contains all the information or the program to develop as a self-evolving being. ...If given no interference, the life in the womb of the mother will unfold until culmination in birth. ...Each subsequent stage of development is interlocked with the prior stage of development. ...If this development is deliberately interrupted, a human life created in the image of God is destroyed. (15)

Scientific findings from biology, genetics, and fetology substantiate that human life is a continuum from conception to birth. The embryonic or fetal baby passes through phases of development which have marked the life of every human person. They are simply stages of our continued identity and existence.

... In reality, respect for human life is called for from the time that the process of generation begins. From the time that the ovum is fertilized, a life is begun which is neither that of the father nor of the mother; rather it is the life of a new human being with his own growth. It would be made human if it were not human already. (DPA n.12. See EV n. 60)

With the advancement of medical technology in the area of hormonal contraceptives, it should be noted that Catholic moral teaching rejects any intentional expulsion of the ovum after fertilization. The semantic gymnastics in identifying the onset of pregnancy with implantation raises additional ethical concerns about many contraceptives.

Some contraceptives may at times act as abortifacients insofar as their action would prevent an embryo from implanting in the womb. The so called "emergency contraceptives" ("morning-after pill") have an abortifacient effect as their primary mode of action.

Abortifacients in reality terminate a pregnancy. The theological understanding of conception is at odds with a confusing political redefining of pregnancy at implantation. From a moral standpoint, abortion refers to "any act which destroys the newly conceived embryo by preventing implantation." (16)

By contrast, the development of an "abortion pill" moves ethical analysis into a new state of the question. RU-486 is a drug which has the induction of an early abortion as its principal use by causing an implanted embryo to disengage from the womb. It has been described as "chemical warfare" on the human fetus. (17) If such an "abortion pill" is marketed in this country, the phenomenon of abortion would be reduced to a trivial, routine, and totally private matter divested of any public responsibility for the protection of unborn human life.

The reality of human life is the basis for the dignity of the human person. Abortion is the destruction of a human being. Pro-abortionists systematically deny and suppress this fact --- that abortion destroys a human life. (18)

A CONSISTENT ETHIC OF LIFE (19)

The consistent ethic of life has been integrated with the United States bishops' *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities*. Part II of this pastoral letter will spell out the implementation of the Pastoral Plan for the dioceses of Kentucky.

The consistent ethic of life has several distinctive advantages for it allows the unified moral vision of the Church to address a wide range of issues that endanger human dignity. That unified moral vision originates from a single moral principle --- opposition to the deliberate killing of innocent human beings.

The broad scope of the consistent ethic opens the concerns about abortion to all other contexts where respect for human life is undermined and threatened. While each issue on the spectrum of life questions is subject to distinct moral analysis, each issue becomes linked together in a common foundation --- the inviolability of human life.

Abortion is a central issue of the consistent ethic but it cannot be an unqualifiedly single issue. Abortion, rather, is linked with other interconnected issues --- health care of the terminally ill, warfare, capital punishment. It is linked with quality of life issues ---hunger, poverty, unemployment, living conditions, tax policies, welfare, nutrition and feeding programs.

Reverence for human life cannot cease with the moment of birth. It calls for the application of pro-life values to every stage of human development.

"Where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly consistent. It cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an indivisible good." (EV n. 87)
--

The consistent ethic of life demands societal protection and the nurturing of life from conception to natural death. It forms a bridge between anti-abortion concerns and social justice concerns as the right to life is connected with quality of life.

The *Pastoral Constitution* of the Second Vatican Council noted this essential unity between life issues. After explicit condemnation of a litany of crimes against life – murder, genocide, abortion, and euthanasia, – the conciliar document goes on to denounce other affronts to human dignity. It lists subhuman living conditions, slavery, prostitution, disgraceful working conditions and other assaults on the dignity and freedom of human beings. (GS n. 27)

To be for life translates into being for justice. As a matter of fact, unjust conditions in society contribute very greatly to a life-denying atmosphere which eliminates viable alternatives to abortion.

ABORTION AND THE CONSISTENT ETHIC OF LIFE

Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, the architect of the consistent ethic of life, described this position as "...anchored in a concern for the unborn...shaped in terms of the strong Catholic commitment to the family...directed toward a preferential concern for the poor." (20)

It would be a mistake to think that the framework of the consistent ethic detracts from the urgency of the abortion issue. On the contrary, the right to life of the unborn becomes the symbol of that ethic of life. The unborn child is a kind of prism of society's regard for the helpless, the dependent, the unwanted, or the powerless. The unborn child creates a special test for the moral vision.

"In every child which is born and in every person who lives or dies we see the image of God's glory." (EV n. 84)

The right to life is antecedent to and the necessary condition for all other rights of a person. It is the acid test for fostering a respect-life ethos in our society.

Abortion, on the other hand, becomes a countersign – a symbol that only the powerful can survive. Destruction of the unborn signals the disregard for the right to life in other areas, especially towards the lives of the vulnerable and the defenseless.

...Abortion and euthanasia have become pre-eminent threats to human dignity, because they directly attack life itself, the most fundamental human good and the condition of all others. They are committed against the weakest and most defenseless, those who are genuinely 'The poorest of the poor.' (LGL n. 5)

A realistic commitment to defend human life at any stage must start with the very initiation of life. Abortion erodes the claims for society's protection for all persons – the powerless, the underdeveloped, the handicapped, the non-functioning or non-productive members of society. (PP 1985)

As the 1989 Resolution of the American bishops states – Abortion is the fundamental human rights issue. (21)

The Challenge of Peace, the 1983 pastoral letter on war and peace, germinated the first sketch of the consistent ethic of life. Consciousness of the ominous threat of a nuclear holocaust was linked specifically to the abortion question. (22)

Peace requires that society gains a full awareness of the worth and dignity of every human person --- the sacredness of all human life.

Violence has many faces: oppression of the poor, deprivation of basic human rights, economic exploitation and pornography, neglect and abuse of the aged and the helpless, and innumerable other acts of inhumanity. (CP n. 285)

When violence becomes commonplace, our sensitivities are dulled to the many faces of violence.

The millions of abortions performed since 1973 reveal a sickness of spirit which has repercussions on attitudes about the threat of nuclear annihilation. The situation of abortion on demand "blunts a sense of the sacredness of life." (CP nn. 286-288)

Direct attack on innocent human life, be it the lives of civilians or the lives of the unborn, cannot be justified. Yet, while there are trends moving citizens to see the folly of nuclear war, millions still fail to be consistent by refusing to join efforts to reduce the horror of abortion. (CP nn. 287-288)

That same disease of spirit is currently evidenced in attitudes about the care of the terminally ill. There is a burgeoning support of active euthanasia and assisted suicide. Like the unborn infant, the dependence of the aged, the sick, and the disabled becomes a prism refracting the attitudes of society towards the helpless. (23)

The beginning of human life and the end state of human life represent the crucial challenge to the consistent ethic of life.

In 1984, we issued a pastoral letter on capital punishment --- "*Choose Life*." At that time as the Catholic bishops of Kentucky, we took a stance against the exercise of capital punishment. Any destruction of human life, innocent or not, is a tragic reality. Our policy on capital punishment was not supported by public consensus. (24)

Nonetheless, our thinking on the matter was motivated by the logic of a consistent ethic of life. Obviously, we do not collapse the distinction between innocent human life and the guilt of one convicted of a capital crime. But the diminishment of the awe for human life has impact on a society's moral sensitivities.

Pope John Paul II reminded us that we must respect life, even that of criminals and unjust aggressors... (EV nn. 56-57; CCC nn. 2266, 2267)

"...our witness to respect for life shines most brightly when we demand respect for each and every human life, including the lives of those who fail to show that respect for others. The antidote to violence is love, not more violence." (LGL n. 22; CCC nn. 2266, 2267)

The practice of capital punishment does not foster respect for human life. Killing as a solution cheapens that respect. To meet violence with violence entrenches a mentality that constricts a society's moral imagination to seek alternatives to violent solutions.

Our opposition to capital punishment is inspired by a gospel value – "no human life, no matter how wretched or how miserable, no matter how sinful or lacking in love, is without worth; no one is beyond realizing and receiving Christ's redemptive grace of conversion at any moment during life." (25)

Abolishing capital punishment would become a step towards breaking the cycle of violence.

"To choose life involves rejecting every form of violence: the violence of poverty and hunger, which afflicts so many human beings; the violence of armed conflict; the violence of criminal trafficking in drugs and arms; the violence of mindless damage to the natural environment. In every circumstance the right to life must be promoted and safeguarded with appropriate legal and political guarantees, for no offense against the right to life, against the dignity of any single person, is ever unimportant." (John Paul II. "Respect for Human Rights: The Secret of True Peace." December 24, 1998)

Resorting to violence frames critical questions that need to be addressed in our nation's social policies.

Why does it seem our nation is turning to violence to solve some of our most difficult problems – to abortion to deal with problem pregnancies, to the death penalty to combat crime, to euthanasia to deal with the burdens of age and illness, to military force to confront international injustice? (26)

The turn away from violent solutions to other alternatives which would enhance and not threaten human dignity would serve better the pursuit of human rights and the common good.

The Gospel of Life fosters a concern for unconditional respect for human life as the foundation of a renewed society. It is the basis for creating "[a] new culture of life, the fruit of the culture of truth and love." (EV n. 77)

We see in our culture "an ongoing conflict between good and evil, a conflict between life and death. As we strive to assure peace and justice, too often it is forgotten that the common good can only be served when the right to life, the right on which all other inalienable rights of the individual rest and from which they develop, is acknowledged and defended." (L&S 1997)

THE RIGHT TO LIFE AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE

The consistent ethic of life dictates that the concern for the unborn broaden to a concern for the quality of life after birth as well. It demands not only concern for unborn children but also concern for women and their needs, especially in pregnancies.

It is ironic that a nation that has practically no legal restrictions on abortions has at the same time the most deficient social policies for aiding women and children. (27) Abortion on demand sends a powerful message to the poor in particular ..."Abort rather than support." Lack of adequate support for women with problem pregnancies creates a false dilemma, a choice "between life for their unborn child and a decent future for themselves and for their families." (28)

Lack of decent income, housing, job opportunities, prenatal care, and health policies can create enormous pressures for a woman not to bear a child.

Our "yes" to life must include a "yes" to social justice. It includes dealing with the social and economic factors that often pressure women to resort to abortion or disregard alternatives to abortion. The consistent ethic of life targets the needs for economic justice, especially for women and children.

Our pastoral letter *Economic Justice for All* treated the plight of women and children in our nation. The "feminization of poverty" still remains a problem to be made right by justice. The poverty status of millions of children continues to increase. (29)

When the economic pastoral was published in 1986, there had been a marked increase in the data on women in poverty. Female-headed households were disproportionately numbered among the poor. Among minority women the poverty rate was significantly higher. (EJ n. 178)

The situation of women in Kentucky in the 1990 census data reflected the same serious concern.

...families managed by women alone are more likely than any other family type to have low incomes, to live in poverty, to depend on public assistance or other support services, or to be homeless and in need of emergency shelter. An increasing proportion of families in poverty are single-mother families. (30)

In 1990, approximately 86 percent of Kentucky's single-parent families had children living with their mothers only. (31)

Although by the late 1990s there have been improvements in the statistics on poverty in general, the "gender gap" for women with children and for children in poverty still lingers as a major social challenge for a just society.

Mary Ann Glendon has given a candid assessment of the high risk of poverty carried by female-headed households. The figures on poverty "in such households tell women that it is risky to devote yourself primarily – or even heavily – to childraising or other non-market activities such as care for a sick or elderly relative." The economic message is not difficult to decipher: "Neither marriage, not your job, nor government assistance is solidly in place for you or your children." (32)

In approaching the issue of welfare reform the United States Catholic Conference has advocated a set of moral principles to guide the social agenda. Two principles in particular are protective against placing children at risk. First, "the protection of human life and dignity" would reject measures which are likely to encourage abortion. Secondly, the "preservation of a safety net for the vulnerable" should be maintained for the essential support of children.

Welfare reform has been an urgent national priority. But reform proposals which undermine the right to life or create serious deprivation for society's most vulnerable members are not acceptable. (33)

"Our nation must move beyond partisan and ideological rhetoric to support families in their essential roles and insist that public policy protect poor and vulnerable children." (SOPR 1995)

Nationally, one in four children are reared in single-parent families, the majority with female heads with higher prospects of living in poverty. (34) In the decade between 1973 and 1983, the number of children living in poverty swelled by four million. (EJ n. 176) The ratio of children in poverty increased to 20.6 percent in 1990. (35) The most recent data indicates that the poverty rate for children in 1997 was 19.9 percent. (36)

The status of children in Kentucky follows the data on the national level. Calculations increase the ratio of poverty-stricken children of single parent (female-headed) households from 13.5 percent in 1980 to 17.6 percent in 1990. (37)

Twenty-seven percent of Kentucky's children or nearly 258,000 children live in poverty. (38) The National Conference of Catholic Bishops' statement of November 1991 reminds us that our children, the most vulnerable members of the human family, represent our future. The sad fact is that children are the poorest members of our society whose lives will be distorted by the lack of basics – food, housing and health care. (39)

The statement from the United States Catholic Conference on political responsibility ranks the lives of children – born and unborn – as central issues in the pursuit of justice and the common good of our nation. (40)

ALTERNATIVES TO ABORTION: LIFE-AFFIRMING HELP AND HOPE

Associating the right to life of the unborn with quality of life issues points to the need for providing reasonable alternatives to abortion. Although legal protection of the unborn continues to be a long-range public policy goal, we must realize that legislation of itself will not prove adequate.

"Here it must be noted that it is not enough to remove unjust laws. The underlying causes of attacks on life have to be eliminated, especially by ensuring proper support for families and motherhood. A family policy must be the basis and driving force for all social policies. ... social and political initiatives capable of guaranteeing conditions of true freedom of choice in matters of parenthood."
(EV n. 90)

In the first place, there must be a conversion of minds and hearts to life-affirming attitudes. The logic of arguments has a place but can never transplant the "logic of the heart" that flows from the compelling witness of lives dedicated to reverence towards life. We must be willing to place our convictions on the line especially by serving the needs of women and men and their children.

Frequently women and men resort to abortion as a solution because they do not see realistic alternatives. Often women make a decision to abort their children because they discover themselves abandoned, confused, or rejected. Such decisions tend to be reactions to isolation and abandonment.

Our responsibility should focus on making the choice for life possible and acceptable.

In its pastoral outreach, the Church must be motivated by solidarity and help carry the burdens of women and men in need. Prenatal care, maternity care, emotional support, adoption services, child care, foster care, educational and vocational assistance can be cited as important measures to help mitigate the evil of abortion. A life-affirming environment cannot be effectively established without necessary life-affirming assistance. (41)

A PREFERENTIAL CONCERN FOR THE POOR AND THE DEFENSELESS (Cf. CCC n. 2248)

The biblical vision proclaims God to be a God of life and a God of justice. The divine mercy is especially directed toward the poor and the needy – symbolized by the widow, the child, the poor, and the stranger.

... Render true judgment, and show kindness and compassion toward each other. Do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the alien or the poor... (Zech. 7:9-10)

According to the prophets, justice and fidelity to the covenant of the People of God are measured by its treatment of the powerless in society. (EJ n.38; EV n. 41) Disciples of Jesus are "called to become neighbors to everyone (Lk. 1:29-37), and to show special favor to those who are poorest, most alone and in most need." (EV n. 87)

For the Christian, the love of God and the love of neighbor cannot be separated. The two great commands – to love God above all things and to love one's neighbor as oneself form a unity. (GS n. 24; EJ n. 43; EV n. 76; n. 41) They can be joined with the vision of Jesus to love "the least" among us. "I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me." (Mt. 25:40)

Jesus, Emmanuel, is mysteriously present in those who are most in need. Failure to encounter Jesus' hidden presence in the neediest becomes a failure to recognize God manifesting himself in history. (EJ n. 44; EV n.87)

As the Second Vatican Council recalled: "By his incarnation the Son of God united himself in some fashion with every human being." (GS n. 22; EV n. 2) The Gospel of life proclaims "that Jesus has a unique relationship with every person, which enables us to see in every human face the face of Christ." This call, in turn, is "for a 'sincere gift of self' as the fullest way to realize our personal freedom." (EV n. 81)

<p>"It is precisely in the 'flesh' of every person that Christ continues to reveal himself and to enter into fellowship with us, so that rejection of human life, in whatever form that rejection takes, is really a rejection of Christ." (EV n. 104)</p>
--

The social doctrine of the Church applied the Gospel message to societal issues in the ongoing discernment of "the signs of the time" and "interpreting them in the light of the gospel." (GS n. 4) The following principles are premises derived from a biblical morality:

- 1) That our fellow men and women are the clearest expressions of God among us. The originality of Jesus' teaching is the linking of the command to love one's neighbor with that of loving God. (EJ n. 13)
- 2) That all members of society have solidarity with one another, especially with the poor and the vulnerable. The authenticity of the biblical covenant is expressed by caring for the poor and the vulnerable. The community of Jesus' disciples is called "to speak for the voiceless and to defend the defenseless." (EJ n. 16)

- 3) That human rights become the minimum conditions for life in community. The right to life stands as the basis of all other rights. It is the function of government to promote the common good and to protect human rights. (EJ n. 17)

We are convinced that the abortion issue is primarily one of justice and human rights. The unborn child represents the most dependent, vulnerable, and voiceless member of our society. The violence of abortion strikes down human solidarity and denies the most fundamental of all rights ---the right to life.

CATHOLICS AND CONSCIENCE (Cf. CCC nn. 1783-1789)

Members of the Catholic Church have “a serious obligation to know what [the Church] teaches and to adhere to it loyally.” (42) Catholics also acknowledge a gift of the Lord in the special teaching office of the pope and the body of bishops. This charism is granted for the benefit of the followers of Jesus to aid them “to know what he teaches, value as he values, and live as free, responsible, loving persons.” (43)

“Jesus, then, is the living, personal summation of perfect freedom in total obedience to the will of God.” (VS n. 87)

“The first and fundamental step toward this cultural transformation consists in forming consciences with regard to the incomparable and inviolable worth of every human life.” (EV n. 96) [see VS nn. 63-64]

There are Catholics who dissent from the clear and constant teaching of the Church on the immorality of abortion. Contrary to that clear and constant teaching some even advocate that abortion may at times be a legitimate moral choice. The longstanding doctrinal tradition on this question can hardly give justification for such dissent. Moreover, such dissent causes scandal and cannot be tolerated as a legitimate alternative to authentic Church teaching. (44)

With the Second Vatican Council we teach that the conscience is “the most secret core and sanctuary of the human person.” (GS n. 16) But the conscience is not a teacher of doctrine. The freedom of conscience is based on a responsible formation in accord with the truth of the gospel. Judgments of conscience must be formed on the objective moral order. Catholics are responsible for forming their consciences “by attending to the sacred and certain doctrine of the Church.” (TLICJ (1976) n. 27; VS nn. 62-63; CCC n. 1758)

The magisterium...constantly reaffirms the moral condemnation of any kind of procured abortion. This teaching has not been changed and is unchangeable. (45)

In our reaffirming of this firm and constant teaching of the Church, namely, that deliberately chosen abortion is objectively immoral, we do not impute guilt nor judge the condition of anyone's conscience before God.

As bishops, however, we are fulfilling our duty to express Christ's teaching on moral matters. We are judging behavior that is objectively wrong and incompatible with the Christian life. (46)

As pastors we realize that there are factors that cloud moral insight. There are conflicts and pressures --- oftentimes born of fear, desperation, or grave hardship --- that reduce moral guilt. But the objective teaching asserts that certain basic human goods and values may never be directly acted against. Inculpability or diminishment of guilt does not eliminate the objective harm or evil to others, to society, and to one's self. (47)

Thus we do not discuss the question of the good faith of those who act against what the Church affirms as divine law. We do set forth the authentic teaching which Catholics should accept as an interpretation of divine law.

In a special way we call on Catholics in Kentucky, "especially those in positions of leadership --- whether cultural, economic or political --- to recover their identity as followers of Jesus Christ and to be leaders in the renewal of American respect for the sanctity of life." (LGL n. 7)

"We need to begin with a renewal of a culture of life within Christian communities themselves. Too often it happens that believers, even those who take an active part in the life of the Church, end up by separating their Christian faith from its ethical requirements concerning life, and thus fall into moral subjectivism and certain objectionable ways of acting." (EV n. 95)

We remain open to appropriate dialogue. But respect for those who think and act differently ought not be understood as indifference to objective moral truth.

...love itself impels the disciples of Christ to speak the saving truth to all people. But it is necessary to distinguish between error, which always merits repudiation, and the person in error, who never loses the dignity of being a person even when he is flawed by false or inadequate religious notions. God alone is the judge and searcher of hearts; for that reason he forbids us to make judgments about the internal guilt of anyone. (GS n. 29)

We hold that objectively speaking abortion is morally and socially wrong. At the same time, without compromising fidelity to the teaching of Christ, we pray for healing and reconciliation for those who tragically have promoted or resorted to abortion.

POLITICAL LIFE AND CONSCIENCE (48)

At our annual meeting in November of 1989, the Bishops' Conference had judged it a moral imperative to give urgent attention and priority to the abortion issue. Our concern is intensified because the moral blind spot that permits more than a million abortions annually will inevitably diminish respect for life in other areas. (49)

If a defenseless unborn child is dependent for survival on the forbearance of another or on the ability to survive independently from his or her mother, then human life has become cheap indeed and we are all vulnerable.

Our “Resolution on Abortion” of November 1989 issued a challenge to Catholics to carry out the implications of their beliefs.

No Catholic can responsibly take a 'pro-choice' stand when the 'choice' in question involves the taking of an innocent human life. (50)

The recognition of a situation involving an intolerable moral evil calls for a response. A moral evil that negates a public good demands the exercise of a moral responsibility to limit and to eliminate that evil.

For more than two decades, the United States Catholic Conference has supported the need for legal protection of unborn children. The good of human life is such an important public good that it warrants protection by law.

Some Catholics evade the issue with the catch-phrase --- “Personally, I oppose abortion BUT ...” Such an evasion is not acceptable. If this excuse implies that the issue is only a matter of some sectarian belief, it misses the point. What is at stake is not a sectarian belief but a basic moral conviction about life and society.

If this evasive approach means that religious and moral principles should not influence public life, it is equally mistaken. To claim that such religious and moral principles should not influence public life is to abandon the authentic common good to the shifting winds of public opinion or to pursue consensus at any price. It is also to raise questions about the integrity and sincerity with which such religious and moral principles are really held. (LGL n. 24)

In a word, to refuse to carry out the implications of teaching pronouncements on these grounds is to employ an invalid argument. Conversely, it is clear that such an approach could not be convincing with problems like racial discrimination, drug abuse, and similar public moral issues.

In an earlier day, religious and moral principles led us to confront the issues of slavery and civil rights for minorities. In our day, are these moral and religious principles to be excluded as we confront such issues as justice for women, housing for the poor, access to health care, and equal treatment for the handicapped?

While a distinction can be made between a moral principle and a policy application, the difference cannot condone inaction. No Catholic politician or voter can hide behind the evasion ---“Personally ... but ...” If there are alternate strategies, no one can be exempt from the logical step to translate moral opposition into

effective strategies. If there is a lack of public consensus to effect full legal protection, no one can be excused from working toward creating a consensus as a first step.

With our fellow bishops, we remind political leaders, especially those publicly identified as Catholic, of “their duty to exercise genuine moral leadership in society.” Moral leadership is not dictated by public opinion polls but is exercised “by educating themselves and their constituents to the humanity of the unborn child.” (LGL n. 29)

POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops issues guidelines on political responsibility prior to the national elections. The bishops of this country do not seek the formation of a religious voting bloc, nor do we desire to instruct Catholics on how to vote either by endorsing or opposing candidates. We do uphold our right and duty to provide moral analysis of the major issues confronting society.

We would expect voters to avoid narrow self-interest as a basis for forming judgments and to examine the stances of candidates on the full range of issues.

We are convinced that a consistent ethic of life should be the moral framework from which we address all issues in the political arena. (51)

Furthermore, we would also expect that the personal integrity, the philosophy, and the performance of candidates be taken into account. (52)

THE NATURAL CHOICE IS LIFE

In the aftermath of sanctioning abortion on demand, the most disturbing phenomenon has been the enshrinement of a faulty notion of “privacy.” Not only are the constitutional grounds of “privacy” questionable but this concept also fails to resonate with the Christian tradition's understanding of freedom. (53)

There is a contradiction in “rights talk” which in practice denies a fundamental right to life. It is rooted “in a notion of freedom which exalts the individual in an absolute way, and gives no place to solidarity, to openness to others and service to them.” If abortion and euthanasia are promoted in the name of freedom, “it is a freedom gone wrong.” (FFL 1995; EV nn. 20; 26)

The argument to justify abortion on demand appears to rest on an assumption that negates the social nature of the human person. The “pro-choice” mentality assumes that a woman (or any other decision maker) is isolated in making decisions --- apparently without any ties to the fetal baby, the father, or a minor's relationship to her parents. In reality, such an interpretation of freedom denies any inherent bonds that establish relationships prior to consent or preference.

This extreme version of individualism downplays relationships to one another and to the good of society itself. It conflicts with a communitarian view of the person which balances rights with duties.

“.. freedom negates and destroys itself, and becomes a factor leading to the destruction of others, when it no longer recognizes its essential link with the truth.” (EV n. 19)

“To claim a right to abortion, infanticide and euthanasia, and to recognize that right in law, means to attribute to human freedom a perverse and evil significance: that of an absolute power over others and against others. This is the death of true freedom: ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who commits sin is a slave to sin.’ (Jn. 8:34).” (EV n. 20)

The concern for rights and privacy without a concern for right behavior is a caricature of freedom. It makes an idol of democracy wherein correct procedures rather than just actions become the standard for public policies. The thrust of ethics then becomes the protection of individuals from interference in the pursuit of self-interest. Freedom is accented as the right to be left alone in “doing one's thing.”

“Democracy cannot be idolized to the point of making it a substitute for morality or a panacea for immorality... but the value of democracy stands or falls with the values it promotes.” (EV n. 70)

Predefining the moral issue of abortion as only a matter of choice ---“Who chooses?” --- has muted the equally important question ---“What is being decided?” Cardinal Bernardin contended that the public argument on abortion must shift from that procedural question to the substantive question --- “What is being decided?” Without including the moral status of the unborn child the public argument neglects an essential facet of the moral judgment. (54)

Ultimately there is the question that must be faced --- what kind of society do we create by denying the right to life of the most vulnerable human beings in our midst? The outline of the story told by our current laws contradicts some of the most cherished values of our nation's moral heritage. (55)

Abortion on demand denies that choices about abortion are serious moral matters.

The unborn child in the womb of the mother cannot be judged to be “a part of the mother.” Even though it is at this stage of development dependent on the mother for survival, it is clearly a separate life, unique and biologically distinct. Such dependence argues not for destruction but for care and protection. All human life, born and unborn, is interdependent. The nurturing of human life before birth is a kind of microcosm of the need for the natural web of relationships throughout life which marks us as social beings. (TLIJC nn. 63-65)

The pro-abortion stance radically re-defines the natural relationships of parents to children, of father and of mother. “Privacy” justifies “independence.” But the structures needed for human well-being demand the contrary --- interdependence.

A morally balanced notion of privacy recognizes the limitation of choices when harm to another human being is involved.

As women involved in the pro-life movement have so ably argued, there is no inherent contradiction in being pro-life and being a woman. (56) How can the choice to take the life of one's unborn child be a step towards freedom?

The support of the "right to privacy" may well have been more protective of the "abortion industry" instead of a woman's freedom.

We would like to address what is a popular misconception that abortion is an issue that involves only women and unborn babies. We want to make it clear that we are aware that every abortion involves a man. The men involved are so often either excused or ignored; in either case it is unfair to both the men as the fathers and the women as the mothers.

We want to affirm the importance that the fathers of the babies involved in a problem pregnancy accept their equal responsibility with the mother in seeking a solution that will choose life. Having chosen life, it is the responsibility of the parents to care for this child. (EV n. 59)

We strongly urge that the fathers involved in the problem pregnancy become much more a part of the discussions as well as the solutions to this life issue.

As a society, we must recapture a respect for natural human relationships. The moment of conception of any person immediately establishes a relationship < that of parent to child. (57) To take the life of an unborn child is not a natural choice. The natural choice is life.

Undoubtedly the climate of sexual permissiveness has diminished this capacity to recognize inherent relationships. From a Christian perspective, human sexuality is symbolic of a special kind of relationship between a man and a woman --- the covenant love of marriage. The Christian tradition upholds human sexuality as tied to two basic meanings ---love-giving (the unitive) and life-giving (the procreative). The marital covenant is described by characteristics which plumb the depths of human experience --- oneness, permanence, fidelity, fruitfulness. To separate sexuality from that context is to encourage sexual irresponsibility. (58)

The love-giving atmosphere of marriage is the matrix for the life-giving dimension, the welcome of new life in Christian parenthood. The child becomes the symbol of that committed love between husband and wife. The parental vocation is seen as an interplay of divine creativity and human cooperation. The father's and mother's love for one another is embodied in their child who is viewed as a gift of God, the source of life. In parenting, husband and wife are imitators and sharers in the divine love which is the transcendent source of life. (59)

Abortion strikes at the heart of the God-given relationships by reducing the family to an aggregate of individuals. It mirrors a culture that does not welcome children and denies human life to be a good in itself. (60)

Pope John Paul II warns of the destruction of the “human environment” and of the need “to safeguard the moral conditions for an authentic ‘human ecology.’” The family rooted in marriage serves as the fundamental structure for the "human ecology." (61)

Great empathy must be given to women who find themselves without the resource of a committed relationship. Compassion should motivate us all the more to offer support and outreach to women who are abandoned but take responsibility for new life. (62)

Whenever human life is cheapened, the sense of wonder about the mystery of life is diminished. The impact is significant in threatening the family “as a life-nurturing institution.” (63)

To choose life is to preserve the protective instinct of the family and its indispensable role in society. It is to respect the bonds created by the distinctive creative power of human procreation. The natural choice is life.

PART II THE PASTORAL PLAN (64)

The Catholic Church in Kentucky continues to be committed to *The Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities* of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The original plan initiated in 1975 was revised in the light of the consistent ethic of life in 1985. In 1989, we issued a “Resolution on abortion” reaffirming the pastoral plan and calling for intensified efforts to carry out the agenda of that plan to end abortions.

For more than a decade the *Pastoral Plan* has served as an integrated approach for pro-life activities. The plan focuses on a three-pronged initiative in three spheres: 1) Educational and Public Information, 2) Pastoral Effort, and 3) Public Policy. These three components <education, compassion and service, and legislation > form a coordinated plan of action on behalf of the protection of the right to life of the unborn in the context of a consistent ethic of life.

A) EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

The first building block of the *Pastoral Plan* is the educational and public information program. The educational dimension responds to the critical need to inform public opinion by creating awareness of and clarifying the basic issues involved in the public discussion of abortion and other human life questions.

“Helping inform the consciences of our Catholic people is our first priority ... But we are also citizens, and share the right --- indeed the duty --- of all citizens to insist that the laws and policies

of the United States be faithful to our founders' conviction that the foremost 'unalienable right' conferred by God our Creator on us all is life itself." (FFL, 119.) [See EV nn. 82; 97]

As we have previously noted, the Church has an important role to play by participating in the public debate about abortion and other threats to human life. Such a mission is a corollary of its task to inform consciences and to promote justice.

While the primary thrust of these educational efforts is directed towards the Roman Catholic community, the Church also directs this program to the wider public.

The changing of perceptions and attitudes on life issues has to serve as a prelude to a realistic discussion on public policy matters.

Questions that pertain to the humanity of the unborn and the reality of abortion need to be addressed in a clear and cogent manner.

The publication of statements concerning public morality, the sponsoring of conferences, and the making available of informational materials exemplify some ways that the public information and education program can be undertaken.

The long range direction of the Church's educational efforts must take place within the Church. There is a need for the inculcating of respect life values across the whole spectrum of the Church's educational apostolate. (EV n. 82)

Emphasis on the fundamental value of reverence for life and the moral evil of abortion must be complemented especially by the development of the theological and moral arguments that can be discovered in our moral tradition.

Those who are engaged in the educational ministry of the Church should be aware of their responsibilities and the opportunities to promote the consistent ethic of life. No aspect of life should be neglected, be that abortion or any life issue.

The annual *Respect Life Program* provides a framework for a year-round approach to continuing education on the critical issues of our day.

Above all, we must remember that intellectual formation must be integrated with example and witness inspired by lived convictions.

B) THE PASTORAL EFFORT --- SERVICE AND CARE

The second component of the *Pastoral Plan* looks to the concrete service of the needs of women with problems relating to pregnancy and those of parents "struggling to accept responsibility for the power to

generate life.” (65) It also reaches out towards those who have had abortions or who have taken part in abortions.

The pastoral care program is principally identified with three areas: prayer and liturgy, service and care, and reconciliation.

PRAYER AND LITURGY

The call to serve the least and the neediest among us is rooted in our identification with the teaching of Jesus. The life of faith must be constantly sustained by prayer and fasting in order to issue forth in love by word and by deed.

Participation in the Eucharist becomes the privileged sacramental celebration that supports us in our attempts to live lives of service and to pursue the works of justice.

The Eucharist draws us into the saving mystery of Christ's death and resurrection --- the paschal mystery that becomes the very rhythm of a life of discipleship. Confirmed and challenged by the Word of God, we are renewed by our participation in the total self-offering of Christ which impels us to serve the least of our sisters and brothers in need.

The opening of the Word of God through preaching can call forth our compassion for persons living through stressful situations and proclaim the truth about "the dignity of all human life, born and unborn, and about the moral evil of abortion and other threats to human life." (66)

Living the Gospel of life must be nurtured by prayer, reflection, and solitude. A prayerful and reflective spirit can move the believer towards solidarity and communion with others, support a hopeful realism in the face of injustice, and forge a link between contemplation and service. Living the Gospel of life accentuates the priority of fostering a contemplative outlook to engender reverence and awe before the mystery of human life. (EV n. 83)

The celebration of the Gospel of life inspired by a *contemplative outlook* is integrally tied to liturgy with its evocative power of gestures, symbol, and ritual. (EV n. 83)

A people *of life* and *for life* have the duty "to preach the Gospel of life, to celebrate it in the Liturgy and in our whole existence, and to serve it with various programmes and structures which support and promote life." (EV n. 79)

All initiatives on behalf of life --- education, pastoral care, and civic involvement --- must be initiated by and sustained with ongoing conversion which only God's grace in Word and Spirit can foster. Prayer is the means by which we as a people of and for life singly and together commune with God and in Christ become recipients and ministers of God's grace --- ministers of the Gospel of life. How can we expect to have the heart for the long struggle for life unless new hearts are created within us? How can people for life promote a culture of life and the reign of God unless we kneel together before the One Source of all life? We are summoned to pray for life.

The pre-eminent place of prayer sustains us with the assurance that "God is always ready to answer our prayers for help with the virtues we need to do his will." (LGL n. 27)

In striving to live the Gospel of life, several virtues must mark our spirituality.

Courage and *honesty* enable us to speak the truth in love about the sacredness of human life. These virtues strengthen conviction that we are not powerless in facing the “compromises, structures and temptations of mass culture.” Over against the lie that we are powerless is the reality that we belong to the Lord and can find our strength in him. Thus, we can make a difference and by the help of God's grace transform the culture of death into a culture of life.

Humility is a gift which will open us to listen with conviction to both friend and opponent on life issues.

Perseverance must guide our actions in the public sphere. Above all, a “*people of life*” must be anchored in the theological virtues, the basis of all apostolic life: *faith* in God's constant presence with us; hope in the goodness and mercy of God; and *charity* towards others “including those who oppose us,” a charity rooted in the love which God offers to all. (LGL n. 27)

SERVICE AND CARE

Prayer moves us to action. Thus service and pastoral care find their source in the compassion emanating from faith-inspired lives. (EV n. 87)

Since the effective availability of assistance also provides alternatives to abortion, our institutions and agencies must continue to reach out to those who have special needs.

Our commitment to the sanctity and the quality of life dictates the provision of service and care by means of a variety of life-supporting measures:

...material assistance --- nutritional aid, prenatal and postnatal care, pediatric services, shelter;
...social services --- services pertaining to adoption and foster care; ...care for victims of rape, abuse, violence; ...educational opportunities for teenage parents; ...spiritual assistance and counseling --- pregnancy counseling centers; ...formation in attitudes of chastity; ...education in fertility awareness.

We recognize the work of other groups, private and public, who make noteworthy contributions to programs of service and care. We are collaborators in providing assistance supportive of women and children as well as families. (67)

In 1986, we created an agency --- *Opportunities for Life*. This organization operates under our auspices and has the mission to offer alternatives to abortion. It was organized to give personal support and practical and confidential help to persons experiencing an untimely pregnancy.

Opportunities for Life maintains a statewide telephone hotline 24-hours a day, seven days a week. It is supported financially by Catholic parishes throughout Kentucky's four dioceses. Dedicated and trained volunteers create the backbone of this life-affirming ministry.

The existence and continued development of programs of care and service embody our response to the mandate to “speak to women a word of understanding and encouragement, of solidarity and support. Both in word and in deed we must inspire the entire community to help carry the burdens of all our sisters in need.” (68)

RECONCILIATION (PASTORAL CARE)

While it is necessary to affirm moral responsibility and fidelity to the teaching of Christ, we may never be forgetful of the need to witness the unlimited mercy of the healing Christ. No one is excluded from the boundless compassion of our heavenly Father. The Church's ministry of healing and reconciliation must be directed towards those who have procured abortions.

Priests and other ministers of the Church should communicate the assurance of God's steadfast love for mothers who have resorted to abortion. The ministry of the Church must embody patience, understanding, compassion, and a genuine sensitivity to God's abiding mercy. There is no room for judgmental attitudes.

For women who have suffered spiritual and mental anguish or remorse, we extend the invitation for sacramental reconciliation. Pope John Paul II has expressed that understanding and forgiveness in his special word to women who have had an abortion:

The church is aware of the many factors which may have influenced your decision, and she does not doubt that in many cases it was a painful and even shattering decision. ...The wound in your heart may not yet have healed. ...But do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope. Try rather to understand what happened and face it honestly. ...The Father of mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You will come to understand that nothing is definitively lost... With friendly and expert advice of other people and as a result of your own painful experience, you can be among the most eloquent defenders of everyone's right to life. You will become promoters of a new way of looking at human life. (EV n. 99)

We commit our support to *Project Rachel* and other post-abortion healing programs which are available.

In addition to providing alternative solutions to abortion, we likewise pledge compassionate care in respect for the dignity of all who are wounded by the violence of abortion. We join the national body of bishops in its pledge to “uphold the spirituality of the Good Samaritan.” (L&S 1997)

To those who are especially troubled for fear of judgment and rejection, we must reach out and commit ourselves to a pastoral approach of understanding, acceptance, and forgiveness. (69)

The *Pastoral Constitution* of the Second Vatican Council notes that actions which destroy, threaten and undermine human life “do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury.” (GS n. 22) Those who victimize their fellow human beings are harmed more than the victims destroyed or injured by them. If God’s non-abandoning love will not forsake the children destroyed by abortion, neither will that covenant-love abandon those who sin against life. If our compassion for the innocent victims of abortion inspires us to pursue justice in the defense of life, so our compassion for the spiritual destruction of those who have procured abortions should inspire us to mercy and reconciliation.

C) PUBLIC POLICY

The present legal climate denying the right to life of the unborn was effected by the 1973 decision of the United States Supreme Court - *Roe vs. Wade*. The impact of that decision was illustrated by subsequent decisions which reaffirmed and broadened the scope of the original decision. (70)

Not until the 1989 Webster decision was there any indication of upholding legal regulation of the destruction of innocent human life by abortion.

The Catholic bishops of the United States have opposed that radical decision of *Roe vs. Wade* as erroneous, unjust and immoral. *Webster* did not overrule *Roe vs. Wade*. But, in finding the Missouri statute requiring tests for viability after the twentieth week of gestation to be constitutional, the Court had raised hopes of legislating limits to the situation of abortion on demand.

In addition, *Webster* had created the opportunity for renewing the initiation of the abortion debate. *Roe vs. Wade* substituted judicial fiat for the democratic process. *Webster* reversed that trend by opening up the possibility of more restrictive interpretation at the state level in virtue of a state's legitimate interest in protecting human life. (71)

The third component of the *Pastoral Plan* is concerned with public policy. It centers on legislative, judicial and administrative efforts to insure legal protection for the right to life of the unborn. In the aftermath of *Roe vs. Wade* attempts to safeguard the rights of unborn children have been frustrated.

Our expectations that the *Webster* decision occasioned were deeply disappointed. The *Casey* decision in 1992 did not in fact overturn the substance of *Roe vs. Wade* and prohibited state regulations from imposing an “undue burden” on a woman’s legal right to access to abortion services. (LGL nn. 9-21)

Yet the Supreme Court did uphold a number of provisions in Pennsylvania law. Although the Court’s judgment overrules a requirement for notification of a husband, it upheld the state’s regulations on informed consent, a waiting period, parental consent for unemancipated minors, and reporting and record keeping by abortion providers. (72)

In Kentucky, the 1998 Regular Session of the General Assembly passed three bills supported by the Catholic Conference: 1) a ban on partial-birth abortion; 2) regulation of abortion facilities; and 3) informed consent with a 24-hour waiting period for abortion. Two of the three bills are being challenged in court.

“...the weaknesses of the Supreme Court’s 1973 reasoning are well known. They were acknowledged by the Supreme Court itself in the subsequent 1992 *Casey* decision which could find no better reason to uphold *Roe* than the habits *Roe* itself created by surviving for 20 years. The feebleness and confusion of the *Casey* decision flow directly out of *Roe*’s own confusion. They are part of the same root system. Taking a distorted “right to privacy” to new heights and developing a new moral calculus to justify it, *Roe* has spread through the American political ecology with toxic results...*Roe* effectively rendered the definition of human personhood flexible and negotiable.” (LGL nn. 9-10)

The public policy goals drawn up in the original *Pastoral Plan* remain intact. The *Casey* decision, however, has not dampened efforts to restore legal protection to the unborn.

The long-range and short-range public policy goals are fourfold: ...pursuit of constitutional protection of the right to life of the unborn to the maximal degree possible; ...enactment of federal and state laws and administrative policies restrictive of abortions to the degree possible along with the elimination of governmental support of abortions; ...ongoing refinement and the ultimate reversal of the Supreme Court’s decision and those of other courts denying the right to life; ...support of legislation providing morally acceptable alternatives to abortion. (73)

Well-planned and coordinated political action locally, statewide, and nationally will be required to achieve these public policy goals. Since the public policy sphere is a matter for all citizens, we appeal to our fellow citizens to collaborate with these objectives by recognizing the justice of this cause and by supporting measures protective of the lives of unborn children. We stand with our fellow bishops in urging public officials, especially Catholics, to advance “these goals in recognition of their moral responsibility to protect the weak and defenseless among us.” (74)

At times the debate over legal and legislative initiatives has proved to be divisive within the pro-life movement itself. Differences in prudential decisions concerning the political reality of public policy proposals should not be construed as a compromise of moral principles. Nearly a decade ago, Cardinal O’Connor, the archbishop of New York and former chair of the bishops’ Pro-Life Committee, offered a valuable clarification regarding this nettlesome issue:

The conflict over imperfect law has definitely been divisive to the pro-life movement. It seems to me that our goal must always be to advance protection to the unborn child to the maximum degree possible. It certainly seems to me, however, that in cases in which perfect legislation is clearly impossible, it is morally acceptable to support a pro-life bill, however reluctantly, that contains exceptions if the following conditions prevail:

- A) There is no other feasible bill restricting permissive abortion laws to a greater degree than the proposed bill.
- B) The proposed bill is more restrictive than existing law, that is, the bill does not weaken the current law’s restraints on abortion. And

C) The proposed bill does not negate the responsibility of future, more restrictive laws. (75)

In *The Gospel of Life* Pope John Paul II addresses the problem of conscience in cases where an elected official who is unalterably opposed to abortion might support proposals directed at limiting the harm caused by permissive legislation. When such permissive laws cannot realistically be overturned or abrogated, voting for a more restrictive law does not “represent an illicit cooperation with an unjust law.” It is a valid approach to limiting evil aspects of such legislation. (EV n. 73)

“...there are times when it may be impossible to overturn or prevent passage of a law allowing the destruction of nascent human life. In such cases an elected official whose position in favor of life is known could seek legitimately to limit the harm done by the law. However, no appeal to policy, procedure, majority will or pluralism ever excuses a public official from defending life to the greatest extent possible.” (LGL n. 32)

Differences in strategies are not to be equated with differences in moral principles.

The *Pastoral Constitution* reminds us that frequently Catholics themselves will disagree on specific solutions. In such circumstances, public discussions should be conducted in a way that provides enlightenment and at the same time preserves mutual charity and concern for the common good. (GS n. 43)

Since tactics and strategies oftentimes remain open to debate and dialogue, it is essential to be united in moral principles. Self-righteous advocacy of pro-life positions without the example of charity tends to undermine the force of arguments.

The public argument on a volatile issue like abortion calls for the maintaining of a spirit of civility. Such a style can be conducive to the building of coalitions which will be an integral step towards the resolution of the issue.

In his last lecture on the consistent ethic of life, Cardinal Bernardin returned to a theme which was a ‘golden thread’ in his writings on life issues --- the style of the Church’s public witness.

...Our style of religious testimony should constantly be a testimony to the theological virtue of charity, which in turn, produces the virtue of civility. Vigorous pursuit of our deepest convictions -- even those involving life and death --- should not involve questioning the motives of others, or their character. ... be known for the way in which our witness leavens public life with a spirit of fairness, respect contending positions ... the style of our internal life is part of our public witness and contribution... (Georgetown University, October 1996)

Civility --- respect, fairness, and restraint --- should mark the Catholic pro-life movement. Above all, the style of our internal life as church should offer compelling witness to solidarity and dialogue. (76)

The advice of the NCCB Pro-Life Activities Committee in 1989 is still sound guidance: “We must present reasons for our proposals which can be understood and appreciated by people of good will who may not share our faith convictions.” The committee encouraged the building of consensus in society regarding the right to life of the unborn child. Its statement urged “that ‘pro-life’ Americans must not give their adversaries an easy victory by launching attacks on each other over questions of political strategy.” (77)

The Pastoral Constitution also acknowledges the need for a correct understanding of the relationship of the political community and the Church. It points out the difference between those activities which individual Christians or groups of Christians undertake on their own responsibility and those carried out in the name of the Church. (GS n. 76)

The very makeup of a pluralistic society demands respect for fellow citizens. Cardinal Bernardin suggested:

There is a temptation simply to proclaim positions, forgetting that in a pluralistic society, we must persuade, build coalitions, and reach out to shape public opinion to support human life. (78)

It is crucial to distinguish between the criticism of policies and the criticism of those who hold various positions. In the pursuit of the defense of human life, we must use ways and means compatible with the Gospel.

The Catholic Conference of Kentucky through its Pro-Life Committee has the task of overall coordination of the *Pastoral Plan* throughout the dioceses of Kentucky. In the area of public policy, the Catholic Conference of Kentucky has the responsibility to monitor social and political trends in the state and of coordinating the efforts of the various dioceses. It also serves the promotion of unity and cooperation among the pro-life groups in the state.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of implementing the Pastoral Plan depends on its application and adaptation at the local level of the diocese and the parish. A plan cannot remain a mere abstraction.

We must note that Kentucky is a state that has been strongly pro-life with regard to the unborn. We also acknowledge the untiring efforts of various organizations, church-related and private, which have championed the pro-life cause with deep convictions and tenacity. Much has been accomplished yet much remains to be done.

We, the Catholic bishops of Kentucky, renew our pledge to activate the resources at our disposal --- parishes, schools, health care institutions, and social service agencies ---to provide alternatives to abortion and to engage themselves in the struggle to create an environment supportive of human life.

To the Catholic people of Kentucky we issue a call to action on behalf of the consistent ethic of life. All can answer our call by prayer and sacrifice on behalf of the sanctity of life. All can answer our call by study of the Church's social teaching, especially of the tradition on the reverence for life. All can answer our call by becoming informed, responsible participants in the democratic process.

We ask priests and religious to be cognizant of the opportunities to inculcate the consistent ethic of life through preaching and other teaching roles. (LGL n. 30)

Families living the Gospel of life should be transformed into indispensable "agents of evangelization through their witness." (LGL n. 35)

"Within the 'people of life and the people for life,' the family has a decisive responsibility." (EV n. 92)

Women, because of their unique role in the transmission and nurturing of human life, can play a special role in promoting the Gospel of life with a new pro-life feminism. (LGL n. 36; EV n. 99)

Health care professionals, lawyers, researchers, educators are asked to make their contribution in public discussion and within their professions.

We encourage ecumenical and interreligious dialogue among the churches and ethicists.

We call upon public officials to exercise their moral responsibility to protect the weak and defenseless. To the larger civic community we extend an invitation to join us as concerned citizens in common cause to effect a pro-life atmosphere in our homes and families, in our towns and cities, in our commonwealth of Kentucky. (LGL n. 32; EV n. 71)

We are in unison with our brother bishops as "we encourage all citizens, particularly Catholics, to embrace their citizenship not merely as a duty and privilege but as an opportunity meaningfully to participate in building a culture of life. Every voice matters in the public forum. ..." (LGL n. 34)

"Real pluralism depends on people of conviction struggling vigorously to advance their beliefs by every ethical and legal means at their disposal." (LGL n. 24)

The dictionary defines a commonwealth as a state "founded on law and united by compact or tacit agreement of the people for the common good." (79) The foundation of the common good rests on the dignity of each and every human being at any stage of development. The common good of a society can be identified with that society's promotion of human rights. The right to life forms the basis for all other rights.

Living the Gospel of life may be described in a phrase from Robert Frost --- a vocation to journey on "the road less traveled." A people of life and for life is a pilgrim people following the Gospel path of "human

freedom rooted in law, law which is rooted, in turn, in the truth about the sanctity of the human person.”
(LGL n.39)

Each generation decides the future of a nation. Human freedom confronts a choice between two roads --- a road to life or a road to death. Let our choice be guided by the biblical injunction:

“...I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendents may live.” (Deut. 30:20)

ABBREVIATIONS:

CBK	The Catholic Bishops of Kentucky
CCK	The Catholic Conference of Kentucky
CDF	The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
NCCB	The National Conference of Catholic Bishops
USCC	The United States Catholic Conference

DOCUMENTS:

CA (1991)	<i>Centesimus Annus [On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum]</i> (John Paul II)
CCC (1997)	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
CP (1983)	<i>The Challenge of Peace</i> (NCCB)
DPA (1974)	<i>Declaration on Procured Abortion</i> (CDF)
DV (1987)	<i>Donum Vitae [Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation]</i> (CDF)
EJ (1986)	<i>Economic Justice for All</i> (NCCB)
EV (1995)	<i>Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life)</i> (John Paul II)
FC (1981)	<i>Familiaris Consortio [On the Family]</i> (John Paul II)
FFL (1995)	<i>Faithful for Life</i> (NCCB)
GS (1965)	<i>Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World</i> (Vatican II)
LGL (1998)	<i>Living the Gospel of Life</i> (NCCB)
L&S (1997)	<i>Light & Shadows: Our Nation 25 Years After 'Roe vs. Wade'</i> (NCCB)
PP (1985)	<i>The Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Reaffirmation</i> (NCCB)
PT (1963)	<i>Peace on Earth</i> (John XXIII)
SOPR (1995)	<i>Political Responsibility: Proclaiming the Gospel of Life, Protecting the Least Among Us and Pursuing the Common Good.</i> (USCC)
TLICJ (1976)	<i>To Live In Christ Jesus (A Pastoral Reflection on the Moral Life)</i> (NCCB)
VS (1993)	<i>Veritatis Splendor (The Splendor of Truth)</i> (John Paul II)

ENDNOTES

1. NCCB, "A Century of Social Teaching: A Common Heritage, A Continuing Challenge," *Origins* 20:25 (1990), 394 - 396.

Consult the following documents for study of pro-life issues: John Paul II, "The Gospel of Life" (*Evangelium Vitae*), (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1995), (EV 1995); NCCB, "Faithful for Life," *Origins* 25:7 (1995), 116-120, (FFL 1995); NCCB, "Light and Shadows: Our Nation 25 Years after 'Roe vs. Wade'," *Origins* 27:24 (1997), 410-411, (L&S 1997); NCCB, "Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics," *Origins* 28:25 (1998), 429, 431-437, (LGL 1998).

2. NCCB, "The Case for a Human Life Amendment," *Origins* 11:23 (1981), 360-372 (NCCB 1981); USCC, "Convictions about Human Dignity," *Origins* 5:42 (1976), 661-667, (USCC 1976).
3. Archbishop J. Francis Stafford, "This Home of Freedom," *Origins* 17:4 (1987), 53, 55-63.
4. NCCB, "Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Reaffirmation," *Origins* 15:24 (1985), 404. (PP 1985)
5. *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1965), n.76. (GS 1965)
6. Pope John XXIII, *Peace on Earth* (Boston: St. Paul Editions 1963), nn. 9-10. (PT 1963)
7. Pope John Paul II, "Stand Up for Humanity," *Origins* 9:18 (1979), 279.
8. *Ibid.*, 280.
9. According to a report in *The Paducah Sun*, there were 4,847 abortions performed in Kentucky from 1 July 1990 through December 1990. Out-of-state women represented 28.6 percent of the total number of abortions performed in the state during that six months period. "Abortion in Kentucky," *The Paducah Sun*, 7 July 1991, 1, 2A. See also *Women in Kentucky: A Documented Profile* (Cabinet for Workforce Development, 1991), 12. [*The Courier-Journal* reported 7,000 abortions in Kentucky during 1996. See "Abortions in state down in past decade, are performed early," *The Courier-Journal*, 27 October 1997, B1, 4.]
10. See NCCB "Statement on Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Veto" ("Stand Up for Life"), *Origins* 26:7 (1996), 10; "Override Urged of Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Veto," *Origins* 26:14 (1996), 213,215. L&S (1997); LGL (1998) n. 10.
11. For a historical-theological treatment on the Roman Catholic doctrine on abortion, consult the following works: John Connery, S.J., *Abortion: The Development of the Roman Catholic Perspective* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1977); John T. Noonan, Jr., "An Almost Absolute Value in History," in *The*

- Morality of Abortion: Legal and Historical Perspectives*, ed. John T. Noonan, Jr. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970). Confer also Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Declaration on Procured Abortion," *Origins* 4:25 (1974), 385-392, (DPA 1974).
12. NCCB, "Abortion: A Clear and Constant Teaching," *Origins* 14:25 (1984), 413-414 (NCCB 1984); EV (1995), nn. 58-62; CCC, 2271.
 13. NCCB, *Human Life in our Day* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1968), n. 27. (NCCB 1968)
 14. USCC, "The Inalienable Right to Life (Testimony on a Constitutional Amendment Protecting Unborn Life)," *Origins* 3:40 (1974), 621. (USCC 1974)
 15. USCC (1974), 621-622; USCC (1976), 666; DPA (1974), n. 12. See also Noonan, *A Private Choice*, 153-162.
 16. Gail Quinn, Executive Director, NCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, 22 June 1998; Richard Doerflinger, Statement (NCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities), 22 June 1998; "Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPs)." *Life Insight* 9:7 (September 1998); Pontifical Council for the Family. "Population Trends: Ethical and Pastoral Dimensions." *Origins* 24:10 (1994), 173-186 at 178-179; EV (1995), n. 13.
 17. Vatican Report (Pontifical Council for the Family) by Gonzalo Herranz. "RU-486: The 'Abortion Pill'." *Origins* 21:2 (1991), 28-33.
 18. USCC (1976), 663.
 19. This summary of the consistent ethic of life is based on the addresses and writings of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin. See *Consistent Ethic of Life*, ed. by Thomas H. Fuechtmann (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1988). This volume contains Cardinal Bernardin's presentations on the consistent ethic of life from 1983 through 1986. For Cardinal Bernardin's presentations through 1996 see Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, *A Moral Vision for America*, edited by John P. Langan, S.J. (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1998).
 20. Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, "The Consistent Ethic of Life and Public Policy," (Address to the USCC Diocesan Social Action Directors' Conference, 1988).
 21. NCCB, "Resolution on Abortion," *Origins* 19:24 (1989), 395-396. (NCCB 1989b)
 22. NCCB, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1983). (CP 1983)

23. USCC Administrative Board, "Statement on Euthanasia," *Origins* 21:16 (1991), 257-258; NCCB; FFL (1995); LGL (1998), nn. 4-6.
24. Catholic Bishops of Kentucky, "*Choose Life*": *Reflections on the Death Penalty* (1994). See USCC Administrative Board, "A Good Friday Appeal to End the Death Penalty," *Origins* 28:42 (1999), 726-727. See EV (1995), nn.56-57; CCC, nn. 2266-2267 (1997 *Editio Typica*).
25. *Ibid.*, 11. (This passage is a quotation from Bishop Bernard Flanagan, "The Death Penalty is Immoral," *U.S. Catholic* (1976), 12.
26. USCC Administrative Board, "Political Responsibility: Revitalizing American Democracy," *Origins* 21:20 (1991), 316. (USCC 1991)
27. See Mary Ann Glendon, *Abortion and Divorce in Western Law* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 53ff.
28. NCCB, "Putting Children and Families First: A Challenge for Our Church, Nation, and World," *Origins* 21:25 (1991), 400. (NCCB 1991c)
29. NCCB, *Economic Justice for All* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1986), nn. 176-180. (EJ 1986)
30. *Women in Kentucky: A Documented Profile* (Cabinet for Workforce Development, 1991), 16.
31. *Ibid.*, 17.
32. Mary Ann Glendon, "A Glimpse of The New Feminism." *America* 175: 1 (1996), 10-15 at 12. See also the following articles by same author: "Feminism & the Family," *Commonweal* 124:3 (1997), 11-15. "Family and Society: International Organizations and the Defense of the Family." *Origins* 27:20 (1997), 343 - 348.
33. USCC Administrative Board, "Moral Principles and Policy Priorities on Welfare Reform." *Origins* 24:21 (1995), 673, 675-677. Bishop John Richard, "The Factors of Genuine Welfare Reform." *Origins* 24:34 (1995), 564-566. Cardinal William Keeler, "Harming Children, Encouraging Abortions," *Origins* 25:22 (1995), 383.
34. NCCB (1991c), 396
35. "Poverty Rates Rose Last Year As Incomes Slipped," *The New York Times*, 27 September 1991, A1, A11.

36. Robert Pear. "Black and Hispanic poverty Falls, Reducing Overall Rate for Nation," *The New York Times*, 25 September 1998, A1, A20.
37. "Children in Poverty: An Indictment of America," *The Kentucky Post*, 4 July 1991, p. 4K. ["Study finds 163,000 children live in families on the edge," *The Courier-Journal*, 18 May 1999, B1.]
38. *Women in Kentucky*, 30.
39. NCCB (1991c), 395.
40. USCC (1991b), 315-316.
41. NCCB, *To Live in Christ Jesus: A Pastoral Reflection on the Moral Life* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1976), nn. 23-24, (TLICJ 1976); NCCB 1989b.
42. NCCB, *Sharing the Light of Faith* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1979), n. 190. (NCCB 1979)
43. *Ibid.* n. 104.
44. NCCB (1984), 414.; EV (1995), n. 82.
45. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation," *Origins* 16:40 (1987), 697-711. (DV 1987)
46. TLICJ (1976), n. 27; NCCB (1979), n. 104; NCCB (1984), 414; FFL (1995), 119. Catholic Bishops of Kentucky, "Statement on Abortion and Political Life," (1990). (CBK 1990).
47. NCCB (1968), n. 15; TLICJ (1976), nn. 24-29; EV (1995), n. 58, nn. 12, 18; VS (1993), n. 79; LGL (1998), n. 22.
48. Some of the material in this section on political life and conscience has already appeared in our "Statement on Abortion and Political Life." (1990). (CCK 1990).
49. PP (1985), 402; NCCB (1989b), 395.
50. NCCB (1989b), 395.
51. USCC (1991b), 318; USCC Administrative Board, "Political Responsibility: Proclaiming the Gospel of Life, Protecting the Least Among Us, and Pursuing the Common Good," *Origins* 25:22 (1995), 369, 371-383. (SOPR 1995)

52. USCC (1991b), 318. See also Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, "Voters and the Consistent Ethic of Life," *Origins* 18:12 (1988), 186-189. Confer Catholic Conference of Kentucky, *Politics and the Church* (1985).
53. USCC, "Amicus Curiae Brief (*Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services*)," (1988), (USCC 1988); "Amicus Curiae Brief (*Turnock vs. Ragsdale*)," (1989), (USCC 1989).
54. Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, "The Consistent Ethic of Life after 'Webster'," *Commonweal* 117:8 (1990), 243-244. (Bernardin 1990)
55. *Ibid.*, 244.
56. See Helen Alvare, "Pro-Life and Feminist?," in *The Wisdom of Women* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1991), 68-70.
57. TLICJ (1976), nn. 30-42. Pope John Paul II, *On the Family* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1982), nn. 15, 26. (FC 1981)
58. FC (1981), nn. 11, 32. Pope Paul VI, *On the Regulation of Birth* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1968), nn. 11-12. NCCB (1968), n. 11; TLICJ (1976), nn. 50-51; EV (1995), nn. 77, 97; Committee for Pro-Life Activities, "Human sexuality from God's perspective," *Origins* 23:10 (1993), 164-166.
59. FC (1981), nn. 14, 18; TLICJ (1976), nn. 43-46.
60. NCCB (1981), 365-366; USCC (1988), 20-24; FC (1981), n. 30. See EV (1995), n. 96, n. 25.
61. Pope John Paul II, On the Hundredth Anniversary of "Rerum Novarum" (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1991), nn. 38-39. (CA 1991)
62. NCCB, "One in Christ Jesus: A Pastoral Response to the Concerns of Women for the Church and Society" (Second Draft), *Origins* 19:44 (1990), nn. 64-65. NCCB (1989b), 395.
63. NCCB (1981), 367.
64. Part II (The Pastoral Plan) is substantially a summary with applications of *The Pastoral Plan* for Pro-Life Activities as revised in 1985 (PP 1985). See also NCCB, "The Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities," *Origins* 5:24 (1975): 359-372; NCCB, "Resolution on Abortion," *Origins* 19:24 (1989), 395-396 (NCCB 1989b).
65. PP (1985), 402.

66. *Ibid.*, 404.
67. *Ibid.*, 404.
68. NCCB (1989b), 396.
69. NCCB, Committee on Pro-Life Activities, "Priests and the Abortion Question"(1982).
70. Statements on the legal-moral positions consult the following documentation: *NCCB/USCC, Documentation on the Right to Life and Abortion* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1974) NCCB 1981, 1989b; USCC 1974, 1976, 1988, 1989. For critical studies and reviews of *Roe vs. Wade* see the following works: Mary Ann Glendon, *Abortion and Divorce in Western Law* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987); Dennis J. Horan et al., editors, *Abortion and the Constitution* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1987); John T. Noonan, Jr., *A Private Choice* (New York: The Free Press, 1979).
71. NCCB, Committee for Pro-Life Activities, "'Webster': Opportunity to Defend Life," *Origins* 19:13 (1989), 215-216. (NCCB 1989a)
72. See "Supreme Court Rules on Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act," *Origins* 22:8 (1992), 113 ff; Helen Alvare. "Abortion, Legal and Political Issues" in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIX - Supplement: 1989-1995, 3-6.
73. PP (1985), 405; NCCB (1989a), 216; NCCB (1989b), 396.
74. NCCB (1989b), 396.
75. John Cardinal O'Connor, "Abortion: Questions and Answers," *Origins* 20:7 (1990), 107. See also Louisiana Bishops, "On Supporting Imperfect Bills," *Origins* 20:44 (1991), 78.
76. Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, "Remaining a Vigorous Voice for Life in Society," *Origins* 26:15 (1995), 237-242. See also Cardinal Adam Maida, "Shaping Culture and Law: Religion's Voice," *Origins* 28:42 (1999), 721, 723-726.
77. NCCB (1989a), 216.
78. Bernardin (1990), 244.
79. See "commonwealth," *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Publishers, 1990), 266.