

Respecting Life

Lesson 28 Summary

Lesson Learning Objectives

- The participants will examine the foundation of the Fifth Commandment, that all humans are created in the image of God.
- The participants will explore how various life issues are related to the Fifth Commandment.

Content Summary

1. The natural law God has put in our heart tells us that every human life has eternal value. From the unborn child to the person in the last stages of life, every life is sacred. The beginning and end of every life is up to God, and only God.
2. God calls us to respect the dignity of every human person. But no generation before has had to consider so many complex and controversial issues that threaten the dignity of life.
3. We are all made in the image of God. This statement is at the heart of morality. It is the foundation for loving God, other people, and ourselves.
4. We have the right to stop someone from inflicting harm on us or others. But if possible we must avoid taking the life of the one who threatens us.
5. Capital punishment is moral only when it is impossible to effectively defend human life in any other way. The Church recognizes that even the worst immoral act does not take away a person's God-given dignity.
6. All citizens and all governments must do everything they can to avoid war. However, the reality is that war still happens, and countries must defend themselves. The Church teaches that war must be a last resort and has developed criteria that must be met if a war is morally permissible.
7. Abortion is a serious sin against the sanctity of life because it intentionally takes the life of an unborn child.
8. Some other serious sins against the sanctity of life are genetic engineering, cloning, euthanasia (sometimes called mercy killing), and suicide.
9. The Fifth Commandment also covers respect for our health as part of respect for life. As individuals we must have respect for our own health, avoiding all kinds of excess: the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

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