

Family & ProLife News Briefs

May 2024

Human Dignity and Standing for Life

Every Person Has Human Dignity In April, *On Human Dignity* [or *Infinite Dignity*] was issued by the Vatican on the 75th anniversary of the UN's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that reaffirmed the **inherent dignity of every man and woman** in the world. It stated that all human beings "must be recognized and treated with respect and love due to their inalienable dignity." The Vatican document states that "even human reason can arrive at this conviction," and that this "applies to an unborn child, an unconscious person, or an older person in distress." Dignity is intrinsic to the person and cannot be lost. "All human beings possess this same intrinsic dignity, regardless of whether or not they can express it in a suitable manner."

The document goes on to explain that the concept of human dignity can be misused to justify many a subjective new "right," often at odds with the original conception of dignity. At the same time, **human progress** is shown by the increasing desire to eradicate racism, slavery, and the marginalization of women, the sick, children, & the disabled. Christianity bolsters such strivings even in an increasingly secularized world.

Cited in the document is the teaching of the Second Vatican Council: "all offenses against life itself, such as murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, and willful suicide" are contrary to human dignity, including "subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children and degrading working conditions" as well as the practice of torture. The second half of the document addresses poverty, war, migration, human trafficking, sexual abuse, violence against women, abortion, surrogacy, euthanasia and assisted suicide, marginalizing persons with disabilities, gender theory, sex change, and digital violence.

"In the case of abortion, there is widespread use of ambiguous terminology, such as 'interruption of pregnancy,' which tends to hide abortion's true nature **Procured abortion** is the deliberate and **direct killing**, by whatever means it is carried out, of a human being in the initial phase of his or her existence, extending from conception to birth." The document further states: "Unborn children are, thus, the most defenseless and innocent among us. Nowadays, efforts are made to deny them their human dignity and to do with them whatever one pleases, taking their lives and passing laws preventing anyone from standing in the way of this. ... Defense of unborn life is closely linked to the defense of each and every human right. It involves the conviction that a human being is always sacred and inviolable, in any situation and **at every stage of development.**" [The full document is available for free online.]

Attacks on Christian Churches

Between January 2018 and November 2023, at least 915 acts of hostility occurred including **vandalism, arson, gun incidents, bomb threats**, and more. In 2023 alone, 436 incidents, more than twice those in 2022, were identified. Hostility against U.S. churches is accelerating. In Annapolis, e.g., Fowler United Methodist Church experienced shredded Bibles, slashed upholstery and a torn-down cross. Arielle Del Turco, director of the Center for Religious Liberty, said: "We see the mainstream media constantly maligning religion and Christianity in particular. It is blamed in academia as a source of oppression ... when you have all these social forces built up, it is going to spill over into real-world effects." Tony Perkins in *The Washington Stand* wrote: "The growing **anti-faith rhetoric** of the Left ... has made it open season on houses of worship." The goal seems to be to interrupt church services and bully Christians into silence. "While we need to be taking practical steps to ensure our churches are safe, we also need to be bold, defend the faith, and live out our Christian faith for the glory of God (Matth. 5:14-16)." [Family Research Council, *Washington Impact Report*, April 2024]

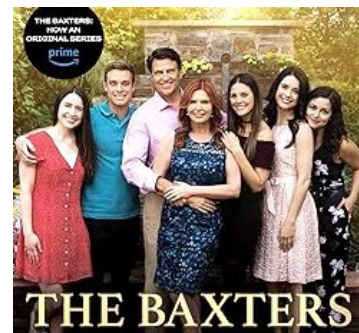
Ed.'s note: The National Shrine of St. John Neumann (Phil.) was the 401st Catholic Church in the U.S. **vandalized since 2020.** [*Our Sunday Visitor*, 3/10/24]

Pray for Joan Bell

Along with 10 others, Joan was convicted under the federal FACE Act for entering and praying in an abortion clinic. She has been held in prison for months & expects sentencing on May 15th. The judge could give her 11 years in prison, which **would be outrageous. Please keep Joan in your prayers.**

"The Baxters" on Amazon Prime

The ups and downs of **relationships and marriages** form the basis of this new video series that aired on March 28th. The couples in the program aren't perfect - they're regular people with regular issues and struggles such as infidelity. Actress and producer Roma Downey said that at the heart of the show is a reminder that "we belong to each other." The series is based on Karen Kingsbury's #1 *NYT* Best-selling Series. [excerpted from *Our Sunday Visitor*, 4/21/24]



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Abortion because “I don’t have a choice”

Significant others, trusted friends and parents often place heavy pressure on women to throw away God’s greatest gift:

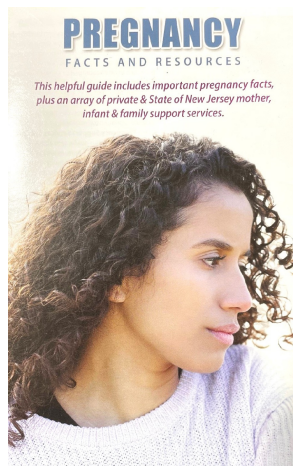
- “You can’t even pay your bills. You can’t take care of yourself, let alone a baby.”
- “You’re too young. It will ruin your life if you keep the baby.”
- “You promised ME we wouldn’t have children.”
- “You have nowhere to live.”
- “You need to finish college first.”
- “You can’t bring a child into that kind of situation.”

Surveys indicate that, among women who’ve had abortions, 58% said they did so to “make someone else happy,” nearly 70% said they felt “**pressure from others** to abort,” and 66% said “they knew in their hearts they were making a mistake.” [Sidewalk Advocates for Life, <https://sidewalkadvocates.org/>] Pregnancy help centers now number over 3,000 in the U.S. and strive to assist women in unplanned pregnancies, to **give them a choice** they feel they don’t have.

Adrianna Rowatti of Life Advocates of NJ Inc. states that dire financial straits and the fact that the fathers walk away are major abortion drivers. She believes that beyond the wonderful work of pregnancy support services, women need **material and financial aid** such as rent or security deposit, cell phone, furniture, grocery gift cards, car repairs, and more.

Her group trains sidewalk counselors to rescue women from choosing abortion. They then aid pregnant moms financially and seek added support from groups such as Let Them Live

(www.letthemlive.org). In addition, Life Advocates issues a **16-page guide** (in English and Spanish) that provides detailed information on sources of free baby essentials, transitional housing, emergency shelters, maternal & child health programs, and more for their NJ area. Rowatti says the greatest need at present is to bring on more volunteers. If interested, contact her at: lifeadvocatesnj@protonmail.com



Help for Infertility

The St. Gianna’ Center (FL) provides help for women’s health and fertility care. Couples who need assistance should check the helpful resources that the Center provides that include FertilityCare.org, DrHilgers.com, CreightonModel.com, International Institute of Restorative Reproductive Medicine, and NaProTECHNOLOGY.com [www.stgiannacenter.com]

Standing for Life at the United Nations

The Center for Family & Human Rights (C-Fam) reports that the UN has a campaign to crack down on what they call “anti-rights” groups that includes pro-family & pro-life groups around the world.

C-Fam has fought policies at the UN on several fronts: it blocked a global right to abortion and an international right to same-sex marriage, and created a global network of like-minded government and activist institutions. It is now establishing The Center for Religious and Political Speech to continue its fight against what it calls “the international thought police.” [www.c-fam.org]

Smithsonian Pays Students \$50,000

Shortly after the 2023 March for Life in the nation’s capital a group of Catholics from Our Lady of the Rosary school (Greenville, SC) were kicked out of the Smithsonian **National Air & Space Museum** for wearing hats that said “Rosary PRO-LIFE.” After a year in mediation, the museum agreed to pay students \$50,000, give them a private tour hosted by museum director Christopher Browne, make personal apologies, and disseminate a report on the incident as well as policies clarifying the permissibility of religious and political speech on apparel. The settlement is one of the largest ever against the federal government over the First Amendment, according to the American Center for Law and Justice.

“We are grateful for this group who were willing to take a stand to defend their rights,” said ACLJ exec. director Jordan Sekulow. “From the beginning, they wanted to know who gave the order to require them to cover up their pro-life apparel or leave the building, & to expose the truth to ensure that this never happens again.”

ACLJ also represented another group of 2023 March for Life participants who experienced a similar incident at the National Archives museum where they were instructed by security officers to take off or conceal the **pro-life messages** on their apparel if they wanted to remain in the museum. NARA settled and agreed to pay \$10,000 to the plaintiffs and take steps to prevent future visitors from experiencing the same treatment. [Calvin Freiburger, www.lifesitenews.com, 4/2/24]

“Euthanasia” is Medical Homicide

Gordon Friesen (Pres., Euthanasia Prevention Coalition) wrote about the spread of euthanasia in British Commonwealth nations, with Ireland now considering it. In all probability the Irish will soon authorize euthanasia for people “diagnosed with a disease, illness or medical condition ... causing suffering to the person that cannot be relieved in a manner that the person finds tolerable.” His warning to Ireland: “If euthanasia is legalized as a cure for suffering, then **suffering people will be ‘cured’** with euthanasia! Suffering people will be killed.” His blog post contains many insights into the spread of the culture of death. [4/8/24, <https://alexschadenberg.blogspot.com/>]