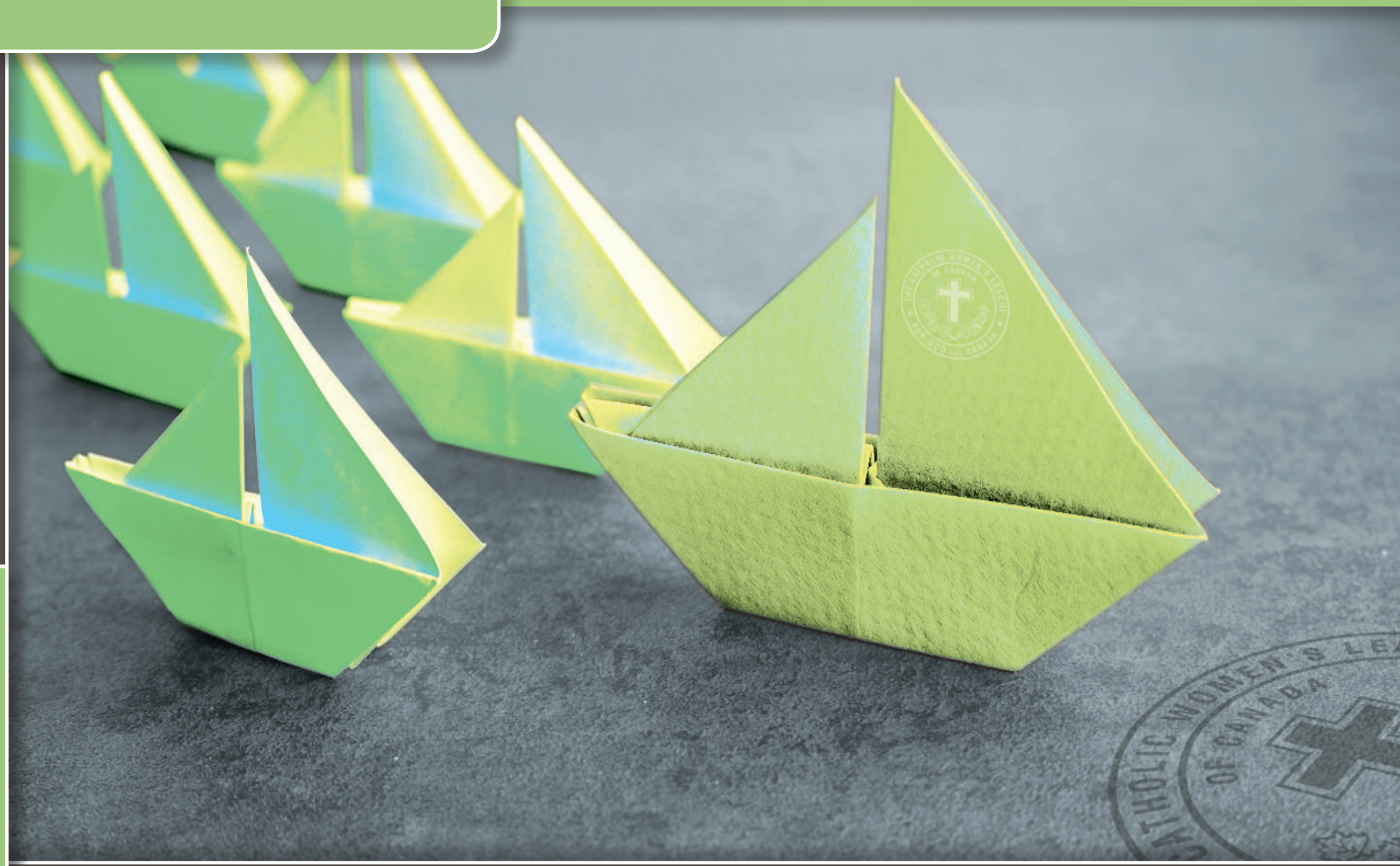
Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Catholic Social Teaching Working Group



GOAL: The Catholic Women's League of Canada addresses and supports Catholic social teaching through advocacy.

STRATEGY: Empower members by providing educational opportunities to learn more about Catholic social teaching.

Introduction

The very first story in the bible is the creation story. The climax of creation on the sixth day is when God creates humankind in His image, "… in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). God gave life to all creatures on earth, yet it was only humankind that He made in His image. "See what the love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are" (1 John 3:1).

Human life is sacred because people were created by God, and they remain in a relationship with God. Where or when people are born, how rich or poor they are and what role they play in society does not alter this situation. Human dignity is not something another person can bestow or take away from another. It is an inherent part of being created by a loving God.

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The sacred dignity of life, bestowed on Catholics by their creator, is one seven key principles of Catholic social teaching and the foundation of a moral vision for society. Yet, in modern society, human life is all too often under attack through abortion, euthanasia, use of the death penalty, abuse of fellow humans in trafficking situations, environmental degradation, intentional attacks on civilians during war, cloning and embryonic stem cell research, to name a few.

As Catholics, members are called upon to uphold the right and dignity of each person regardless of who they may be or what limitations they may have. Pope St. John Paul II wrote in his encyclical E*vangelium Vitae*,

> In a special way, believers in Christ must defend and promote this right [the sacredness of human life from its very beginning until its end], aware as they are of the wonderful truth recalled by the Second Vatican Council: "By his incarnation the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every human being." This saving event reveals to humanity not only the boundless love of God who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn 3:16), but also the incomparable value of every human person.

This document will provide some tools and resources that councils need to be a voice in the world for the sacredness and dignity of life and to spread the understanding that people are more important than objects. Together, members will weigh each situation and examine every institution to see whether it threatens or enhances life and the dignity of the human person and will act with justice.

Organizations

Name, Principal Officer	Website	Description
Amnesty International	amnesty.ca/what-we-do/indigenous-peoples/	The Canadian chapter of Amnesty International invites Christians to action in standing up for the rights of Indigenous peoples who face issues at a disproportionally higher rate than other ethnicities, such as homicide, incarceration and a lack of safe drinking water.
Campaign Life Coalition Jeff Gunnarson, National President	campaignlifecoalition.com/	Campaign Life Coalition advocates for protecting life from conception to natural death. Find information for many campaigns and ways to get actively involved, such as 40 Days for Life, March for Life and Life Chain, on its website.
Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform Nick Rosendal, President	endthekilling.ca/	This organization works towards educating the public about the injustice of abortion and uses shocking imagery of abortion victims in their campaigns because it effectively changes peoples' minds and saves lives. The centre also employs human rights apologetics, science and empathy to have conversations about abortion that allow people to come to a new understanding of what abortion truly is.
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' Standing Committee for Family and Life Most Rev. Christian Lépine, Chairman	cccb.ca/about/commissions-committees/standing-committees/standing-committee-for-family-and-life/	In response to the 2020 Plenary Assembly of Bishops, the committee promotes the sanctity of life from conception to natural death, responds to questions about euthanasia and encourages the development of biotechnologies respecting life and the human person.
Canadian Human Rights Commission (anti-racism work)	chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/anti-racism-work	The Canadian Human Rights Commission offers a look at the work the government of Canada is doing to advocate for human rights free from systemic racism.
Canadian Physicians for Life Dr. Ryan Wilson, President	physiciansforlife.ca/	Physicians for Life is a group of practicing and retired physicians, medical residents and students who believe in the Hippocratic tradition, which preserves life at all stages and for all reasons, seeks to relieve suffering and promotes healing.

Name, Principal Officer	Website	Description
Care Not Kill	carenotkill.ca/	An initiative of the Association for Reformed Political Action Canada—a grassroots Christian political advocacy organization that promotes suicide prevention, offering care and support for people rather than assisted death. It opposes the movement that normalizes that some people are more valuable than others.
Choice 42 Laura Klassen, Founder and Director	choice42.com/#home-nav	A Canadian Christian anti-abortion movement with global influence that empowers women, whom it believes to be capable and courageous, to choose life for their babies.
Compassionate Community Care Kathy Matusiak Costa, Director	compassionatecommunitycare.org/	This organization advocates for and provides non-medical support for people who are suffering. It also provides education and training to caregivers, professionals and the public about end-of-life situations to respect human life until natural death. Its website offers a way for people to reach out for support regarding euthanasia and assisted suicide prevention.
Euthanasia Prevention Coalition Alex Schadenberg, Executive Director	epcc.ca/	This organization works towards legal prohibitions against euthanasia and assisted suicide while promoting increased public awareness of hospice and palliative care that focus on effective methods to control pain and suffering until natural death. It advocates and represents the vulnerable in the courts and offers newsletters, petitions, resources and events on its website.
Focus on the Family, United States Jim Daly, President	focusonthefamily.com/pro-life/	This fundamentalist Christian organization that roots its pro-life initiatives in the biblical concept of man and woman created in the image and likeness of God believes Christians are called to defend, protect and value human life. Several topics of information are available on its website, including abortion, adoption, assisted suicide and the value of human life.
Human Life International	hli.org/	Human Life International works globally to teach people to oppose the anti-life movement and build cultures with family values honouring life at every stage. The organization offers programs, training and resources on the subjects of abortion, contraception, euthanasia, marriage and family and reproductive technologies.

Name, Principal Officer	Website	Description
Joy Smith Foundation Janet Campbell, CEO, President	joysmithfoundation.com/	"The Joy Smith Foundation works to provide access to information so that every Canadian man, woman and child is educated and empowered to stay safe from manipulation, force, or abuse of power designed to lure and exploit them in the sex trade or forced labour."
Kairos Canada Aisha Francis, Executive Director	kairoscanada.org/	A Canadian organization administered by the United Church of Canada with global partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East that, through prophetic witness, advocates for social change by offering programs on environmental justice, gender justice, Indigenous rights and migrant justice.
LifeCanada Pat Weidemer, President	lifecanada.org/about/	LifeCanada is a national pro-life organization of more than 70 local and provincial groups focused on educating Canadian institutions and people on the value of human life.
Lutherans for Life Rev. Richard Juritsch, President	lutheransforlife.org/	A pro-life organization that honours the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Headquartered in the United States, its website has links to newsletters, publications, bible studies and opportunities to attend conventions.
Matercare International Simon Walley, Executive Director	matercare.org/	An organization of physicians specializing in women's health that focuses on mothers and their babies, both born and unborn, through the eyes of Pope John Paul II's encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*. It provides education, service, research and training internationally in the hopes of reducing abortions and the death or suffering of mothers, babies and the preborn world-wide, but especially in areas where health care is limited.
National March for Life Organized by Campaign Life Coalition	marchforlife.ca/	Organized in solidarity with hundreds of other marches held worldwide, the national March for Life takes place on Parliament Hill annually. Visit its official website for more information.

Name, Principal Officer	Website	Description
Priests for Life Canada Fr. Thomas Lynch, National President	priestsforlifecanada.com/	This association of ordained, religious and laypeople defends the view that human life is a gift from God. It hopes to join in union with all Catholics in support of life from conception to natural death and other organizations promoting these same ideals.
ProWomanProLife Andrea Mrozek, Founding Director	prowomanprolife.org/	ProWomenProLife comprises women from all walks of life who believe that being pro-life is pro-woman, that abortion is harmful to women and that it is a human and social issue because the fetus is a unique individual.
St. Joseph's Workers for Life and Family	sjw.ca/	The organization is grounded in the moral teaching of the Catholic church regarding the sacredness of life from conception to natural death. It gathers pertinent information from reliable sources such as theologians, canon lawyers and clergy to create publications and advocates for the Catholic understanding of marriage and defenders of the Catholic faith.
Students for Life of America Kristan Hawkins, President	studentsforlife.org/	An American organization that provides young people with experiences that change their worldview and prepare them to defend life. It offers support and mentorship so that students become leaders who fuel the movement to abolish abortion in America.
The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking Margot Franssen, O.C., Founder, Co-chairperson Sheila O'Brien, C.M., Founder, Co-chairperson	canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/	A Canadian organization focused on abolishing human trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation in Canada. It collaborates with several other entities, including businesses, the government and frontline service providers.

Websites

Name	Website	Information
Executing Grace	executinggrace.com/	This website promotes Shane Claiborne's book, *Executing Grace: How the Death Penalty Killed Jesus and Why It's Killing Us*. Links to other information about opposing the death penalty, with a list of books and organizations that uphold life and discourage the death penalty, are also offered.
Human Trafficking in Canada Public Safety Canada, Government of Canada	canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/campaigns/human-trafficking.html?utm_campaign=ps-sp-human-trafficking-postelect-21-22&utm_medium=sem&utm_source=ggl&utm_content=ad-text-en&utm_term=human%20trafficking%20in%20canada&adv=2122-175228&id_campaign=15353351518&id_source=128857688046&id_content=563806914645&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI8p6_qZOe9QIVAHNvBBoEvgH5EAAYASAAEgISEvD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds	This government website offers explanations of what human trafficking is and how it is used in Canada. Resources are also available to help people determine if someone they know may be involved in a human trafficking situation and a link to the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline at (833) 900-1010.
Indigenous Foundations University of British Columbia	indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/aboriginal_rights/	This website has a wealth of information on the history of Indigenous rights in Canada, including links to many different articles regarding court cases, government policies and cultural information.
Students for Life of America A list of pro-life movies.	studentsforlife.org/pro-life-movies/ A list of pro-life movies.	This website provides a comprehensive list of documentaries, movies and science fiction films with pro-life themes. It also contains a list of pro-choice films that can be used to build an understanding about the apologetics at play.

Educational Opportunities

Courses and Articles	Website	Information
Anti-Racism Learning Series Government of Canada	csps-efpc.gc.ca/anti-racism-eng.aspx	The Anti-Racism Learning Series is a collection of training tools and resources addressing racism and discrimination in the workplace in order to educate the public on issues around racism and to break down the barriers that exist for the marginalized and racialized groups in the basic systems in Canada.
Experiences Canada	experiencescanada.ca/forums-conversations/anti-racism-conversations/anti-racism-resources/	Experiences Canada offers resources for ending anti-black racism, including an education guide for black history in Canada.
Indigenous Canada University of Alberta/Coursera	coursera.org/learn/indigenous-canada?utm_source=gg&utm_medium=sem&campaignid=1344 0968592&utm_campaign=12-Indigenous-Canada-Alberta-CA&utm_ content=12-Indigenous-Canada- Alberta-CA&adgroupid=1301607003 84&device=c&keyword=indigenous %20studies&matchtype=b&netw ork=g&devicemodel=&adpostion= &creativeid=526533617725&hide_ mobile_promo&gclid=EAIaIQobCh MIz8iXn5_KU9AIVhBB9Ch2ryArOE AAYASAAEgIOLvD_BwE	A free Canadian history course from an Indigenous perspective connecting many key issues Indigenous peoples deal with today to situations from the past, such as the fur trade, land claims, legal systems and rights.
National Human Trafficking Education Centre	https://joysmithfoundation.com/national-human-trafficking-education-centre/	The centre offers educational resources to help Canadians understand and fight human trafficking. A variety of courses that range in length intended for different audiences i.e. youth, parents, educators, survivors, social workers, front-line responders, medical professionals and those working in the justice system. Some of the courses are offered free and others are offered for a fee.
"The Death Penalty: Any nation's shame." John Howard Society of Ontario	johnhoward.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/the-death-penalty-any-nations-shame-march-2001.pdf	The article outlines opposition to the death penalty. It informs readers that the death penalty is not used in Canada, provides a timeline on its abolishment and explains arguments against reinstatement.

Books

Title, Author	Publisher, Date, Link	Synopsis
A Mind Spread Out on the Ground Alicia Elliott	Doubleday Canada, 2019.	The author uses her life experiences to enlighten readers about the ongoing legacy of colonialism on Indigenous peoples in North America in hopes of creating a better future for those on the fringes of society because of race, poverty, mental illness and more.
Celebrating 20 Years of Protecting People 1999-2019: A Commemorative Compilation Euthanasia Prevention Coalition	epcc.ca/a-commemorative-compilation/	A collection of works from Euthanasia Prevention Coalition's advocacy for life.
Do You Call This a Life?: Blurred Boundaries in the Netherlands' Right-To-Die Laws Gerbert van Loenen	Ross Lattner, 1st edition, 2014.	A historical book on the development of euthanasia in the Netherlands.
Entangled 1: Caught Between Choices Jen Romnes	FriesenPress, 1st edition, 2016.	The author details her life with an abusive father in this true story.
Entangled 2: Betrayed from Within Jen Romnes	FriesenPress, 2017.	This book tells the true story about the author's struggle to support her mother, who her abusive father had institutionalized.
Exposing Vulnerable People to Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide Alex Schadenberg	CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013.	The author looks at the practice of euthanasia in Belgium, where the practice of assisted suicide and laws have influenced other countries, including Canada, in the legalization of euthanasia and rules surrounding it. He exposes that the practice in Belgium does not always match the official euthanasia story.

Title, Author	Publisher, Date, Link	Synopsis
Made to Live: A Physician's Journey to Save Life Paul Saba M.D.	Word Alive Press, 2020.	Beginning with his fight to save his baby girl, the author challenges the myths of euthanasia and assisted suicide. Dr. David Stevens, MD, M.A., recommends reading this book before these options are presented to patients or their loved ones.
The Sacredness of Human Life: Why an Ancient Biblical Vision Is Key to the World's Future David P. Gushee	William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013.	In current culture, the sacredness of human life seems to be most prominent in the political anti-abortion movement. The author endeavours to provide a deeper understanding of the Christian teachings of the sacredness of life, including the topics of war, judicial torment and killing, historical assaults on life and biotechnology.
To the Heart of the Matter: The 40 Day Companion to Live a Culture of Life Shawn D. Carney, President and CEO of 40 Days for Life	Cappella Books, 2019.	It can be challenging to know where to start when one wants to work for life. This book highlights the many ways one can fight against the culture of death in society by building a culture of life. Prayers and intentions for each of the 40 days are also included.
Unplanned: The Dramatic True Story of a Former Planned Parenthood Leader's Eye-Opening Journey Across the Life Line. Abby Johnson	SaltRiver, 2011.	The former director of Planned Parenthood tells her story of how after participating in her first abortion procedure, she walked across the street to join the Coalition of Life.

Films

Title, Year, Director, Length	Producer, Link	Description
180. 2011.w33:02 minutes	Produced by Living Waters/Ray Comfort livingwaters.com/movie/180movie/	An emotionally charged film that uses questions about the Holocaust to make people think about the issue of abortion.
Fatal Flaws: Legalizing Assisted Death. 2018. Kevin Dunn, Director 56:00 minutes	Produced by DunnMedia in association with Euthanasia Prevention Coalition. fatalflawsfilm.com/ youtube.com/watch?v=if9n5ETLCMc	Assisted death is often offered to people as an option to alleviate suffering. This film argues the laws surrounding this procedure are flawed and encourage people to end their lives, often at their lowest point. The film looks at how these decisions affect society and the long-term consequences of the legalization of euthanasia.
The 40 Film. 2013. John Morales, Director 60:02 minutes	youtube.com/watch?v=ly9_H11mxwk	In the year of the 40th anniversary of Roe vs Wade, this film looks at how abortion has affected the United States and shows a correlation between human and civil rights and the fight to end abortion.
The Euthanasia Deception. 2016. Kevin Dunn, Director 53:17 minutes	Producer: DunnMedia in association with Euthanasia Prevention Coalition. epcc.ca/dvds/ vimeo.com/179955354	This short film looks at the euthanasia and assisted suicide movements in Belgium and Canada with personal testimonies from people who lost loved ones in this way or were encouraged to take this course of action.

Prayers and Prayer Services

Resource	Link	Information
Bible Study CD Joy Smith Foundation	info@joysmithjoundation.com	The Bible Study CD can be obtained free of charge by making a request via email.
Catholic Digest	catholicdigest.com/news/nationworld/pro-life-prayers/	Five pro-life prayers are available from Catholic Digest.
HELP	prolifehelp.org/prayers.html	An alphabetical list of prayers on all topics pro-life.
Prayer Service to End Human Trafficking The Catholic Women's League of Canada	cwl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/712-Human-Trafficking-Prayer-Service.pdf	A ready-made prayer service from The Catholic Women's League of Canada.
Priests for Life (American)	priestsforlife.org/prayers/ prolifeproducts.org/prayer-resources	Priests for Life's website offers links to prayer booklets available for download or purchase. Some resources include rosary meditations and prayers for lawmakers, those who have experienced abortion and many more.
Pro-Life Prayers United States Conference of Catholic Bishops	usccb.org/pro-life-prayer usccb.org/prayers/prayer-end-use-death-penalty usccb.org/prayers/prayer-end-trafficking	The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops offers various prayer resources. Prayers include blessings for children in the womb and pro-life pilgrims, holy hour prayers, litanies, novenas, rosary intentions, prayers to end the use of the death penalty and prayers to end human trafficking.

Papal Documents

Title, Author, Year Published	Link	Description
Caritas in Veritate (nn28 and 75). Pope Benedict XVI, 2009.	www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html	Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical letter on integral human development in charity and truth.
Dignitatis Humanae. Pope Paul, 1965.	www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html	Pope Paul's declaration on religious freedom.
Donum Vitae. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987.	www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19870222_respect-for-human-life_en.html	Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation Replies to Certain Questions of the Day
Evangelium Vitae. Pope John Paul II, 1995.	www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html	An encyclical letter on the value and inviolability of human life by Pope John Paul II.
Familiaris Consortio. Pope John Paul II, 1981.	www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html	An apostolic exhortation on the role of the Christian family in the modern world.
Humanae Vitae. Pope Paul VI, 1968.	www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html	Pope Paul VI's encyclical letter on the regulation of birth.
Laudato Si' (Chapter 3.3). Pope Francis, 2015.	www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html	Pope Francis' encyclical letter on Care for Our Common Home.

Title, Author, Year Published	Link	Description
Pro-life documents on the Vatican website. Popes Francis, Benedict XVI, John Paul II, Leo XIII, Pius XI and Pius X and others.	www.vatican.va/content/vatican/en/search.html?q=pro+life	The Vatican website's search tool shares links to various pro-life documents such as speeches, homilies, audiences, messages, letters, encyclicals and more.
Veritatis Splendor. Pope John Paul II, 1993.	www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html	Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter on the fundamental questions of the church's moral teaching.

Church Documents and Teaching

Catechism Paragraph	Quote
356	"Of all visible creatures only man is "able to know and love his creator." He is "the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake," and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity:"
357	"Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead."
362	"The human person, created in the image of God, is a being at once corporeal and spiritual. The biblical account expresses this reality in symbolic language when it affirms that 'then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.' Man, whole and entire, is therefore *willed* by God."
1700	"The dignity of the human person is rooted in his [her] creation in the image and likeness of God...; it is fulfilled in his [her] vocation to divine beatitude... It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself [herself] to this fulfillment. By his [her] deliberate actions, the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience... Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth."
1738	"Freedom is exercised in relationships between human beings. Every human person, created in the image of God, has the natural right to be recognized as a free and responsible being. All owe to each other this duty of respect. The *right to the exercise of freedom*, especially in moral and religious matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person. This right must be recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and public order."
2258	"'*Human life is sacred* because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being.'"
2261	"Scripture specifies the prohibition contained in the fifth commandment: 'Do not slay the innocent and the righteous.' The deliberate murder of an innocent person is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human being, to the golden rule, and to the holiness of the Creator. The law forbidding it is universally valid: it obliges each and everyone, always and everywhere."

Catechism Paragraph	Quote
2268	"The fifth commandment forbids *direct and intentional killing* as gravely sinful. The murderer and those who cooperate voluntarily in murder commit a sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance. Infanticide, fratricide, parricide and the murder of a spouse are especially grave crimes by reason of the natural bonds which they break. Concern for eugenics or public health cannot justify any murder, even if commanded by public authority."
2269	"The fifth commandment forbids doing anything with the intention of *indirectly* bringing about a person's death. The moral law prohibits exposing someone to mortal danger without grave reason, as well as refusing assistance to a person in danger. The acceptance by human society of murderous famines, without efforts to remedy them, is a scandalous injustice and a grave offense. Those whose usurious and avaricious dealings lead to the hunger and death of their brethren in the human family indirectly commit homicide, which is imputable to them. *Unintentional killing* is not morally imputable. But one is not exonerated from grave offense if, without proportionate reasons, he has acted in a way that brings about someone's death, even without the intention to do so."
2270	"Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person—among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life. Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth."
2271	"Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law: You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish. God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes."
2272	"Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life. 'A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*,' 'by the very commission of the offense,' and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law. The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society."

Catechism Paragraph	Quote
2273	"The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a *constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation:* 'The inalienable rights of the person must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority. These human rights depend neither on single individuals nor on parents; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin. Among such fundamental rights one should mention in this regard every human being's right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death.' 'The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law. When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined.... As a consequence of the respect and protection which must be ensured for the unborn child from the moment of conception, the law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child's rights.'"
2274	"Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being. *Prenatal diagnosis* is morally licit, 'if it respects the life and integrity of the embryo and the human fetus and is directed toward its safe guarding or healing as an individual.... It is gravely opposed to the moral law when this is done with the thought of possibly inducing an abortion, depending upon the results: a diagnosis must not be the equivalent of a death sentence.'"
2275	"'One must hold as licit procedures carried out on the human embryo which respect the life and integrity of the embryo and do not involve disproportionate risks for it, but are directed toward its healing, the improvement of its condition of health, or its individual survival.' 'It is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation as disposable biological material.' 'Certain attempts to *influence chromosomic or genetic inheritance* are not therapeutic but are aimed at producing human beings selected according to sex or other predetermined qualities. Such manipulations are contrary to the personal dignity of the human being and his integrity and identity' which are unique and unrepeatable."

Documents from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB)

Title, Date	Link	Description
"A Pastoral Reflection on Medical Assistance in Dying." 2018. Atlantic Episcopal Assembly	cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2018-01-25-AEA-Pastoral-letter.pdf	Understanding that euthanasia and assisted suicide can be a complex and emotional issue affecting Canadians, the bishops of the Atlantic provinces provide a pastoral reflection on the topic, including a plea for positive alternatives. They remind the faithful that every person must be entrusted to the mercy of God but that some decisions may alter the sacramental care one may receive at the end of life.
For Freedom Christ has Set us Free: Pastoral Letter on Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Canada. 2021.	cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CCCB-Human-Trafficking-Pastoral-Letter-2021.pdf	On November 22, 2021, the Commission for Justice and Peace released this pastoral letter that explains the harm prostitution and sexual trafficking of human persons inflicts on those involved and calls for the criminalization of this practice.
"Important Facts About Bill C-7 and Euthanasia in Canada." 2020.	cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Important-Facts-about-Bill-C-7-and-Euthanasia-in-Canada_EN_FINAL.pdf	Data from the 2019 statistics on medical assistance in dying in Canada revealed that many people choose to die because they feel their future life will lack dignity, meaning and value. Expanding the law to include a person's disability as a reason to be euthanized enforces the idea that living in dignity depends on one's usefulness in society.
Indigenous Peoples Initiatives	cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/initiatives/	Since the 17th century, Canadian bishops have engaged with Indigenous peoples and continue today with listening circles, the National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous People and Returning to Spirit workshops focused on personal transformation and empowerment for those in need of healing.
Let Justice Flow Like a Mighty River: Brief by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.	cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/let_justice_flow_like_a_mighty_river.pdf	This 1995 publication stems from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples on November 8, 1993. It contains eleven commitments the CCCB made and seven recommendations made to the Royal Commission. It also includes workshop material which, although not all-encompassing of the issues, may be used as a starting place to encourage further study and conversation.
"Message to the Faithful on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide." 2021.	cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Euthanasia-and-assisted-suicide-Message-to-faithful-8-April-2021-EN.pdf	A letter to encourage the faithful to remain resolute in the Catholic understanding that euthanasia and assisted suicide are against church teaching.

Title, Date	Link	Description
New revision of number 2267 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the death penalty. 2018.	cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2267-Death-Penalty-EN.pdf	In February 2018, an amendment was made to the catechism, clarifying the church's position that "the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person."
Pastoral Letter on Human Trafficking. 2010.	cccb.ca/document/pastoral-letter-on-human-trafficking/	On the occasion of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver, British Columbia, the Commission for Justice and Peace released this letter on human trafficking, an unfortunate aspect of the games. The CCCB defines human trafficking, explaining how it becomes possible and what Canadians can do to oppose it.
"Remaining True to Christ Now and at the Hour of our Death: A Pastoral Letter from the Catholic Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories." 2020.	cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-01-15_Pastoral-Letter-on-Euthanasia-Assisted-Suicide.pdf	The bishops of Alberta and Northwest Territories provide a pastoral approach to the issues of end-of-life decisions regarding euthanasia and assisted suicide. The church teaches the sanctity of life from conception to natural death, and the ministries offered must be in line with that teaching.
Statement on the 30th anniversary of the Morgentaler Decision. 2018.	cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Statement_30th_anniversary_Morgentaler_Decision_-_EN.pdf	In reflecting on the court decision of 1988, the bishops remind people the judges did not endorse abortion on demand—that they also felt the interests of the unborn must be protected. The bishops explain the toll abortion plays on society and encourage people to fight for a law that protects the lives of the unborn.
Statement on the approval of Bill C-14 legalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide. 2016.	cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/CCCB_statement_passage_Bill_C-14_-_EN.pdf	Canadian bishops respond to the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide calling it a grave and moral injustice to the people of Canada.
"The Position of the Catholic Church and Stance of the Catholic Bishops of Canada On 'The Giving of Assistance in Dying': Submission by the President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops to the Expert Panel on Options for a Legislative Response to *Carter v. Canada*." 2015.	cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Submission_to_the_Expert_Panel_on_assisted_suicide_-_EN.pdf	The bishops explain Catholic church teachings regarding the subjects of the common good, moral and social evil of assisted suicide, the imperative of palliative care, protection of the vulnerable and safeguarding freedom of conscience and religion.

Religious Congregations

Name	Website
Sisters of Life	sistersoflife.org/

Scripture Quotes

Scripture Source	Scripture Quote
Genesis 1:27-28	"So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'"
Genesis 9:5-6	"For your own lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning: from every animal I will require it and from human beings, each one for the blood of another, I will require a reckoning for human life. Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person's blood be shed; for in his own image God made humankind."
Deuteronomy 30:19	"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live."
1 Samuel 16:7	"But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.'"
Job 10:11-12	"You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews. You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit."
Job 33:4	"The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life."
Psalm 22:10-11	"On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help."
Psalm 127:3-5a	"Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them."

Scripture Source	Scripture Quote
Psalm 139:13-16	"For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth."
Proverbs 31:8	"Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute."
Isaiah 44:24	"Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who by myself spread out the earth."
Isaiah 49:1,5	"Listen to me, O coastlands, pay attention, you peoples from far away! The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me... And now the Lord says, who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him, for I am honoured in the sight of the Lord, and my God has become my strength... ."
Jeremiah 1:4-5	"Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.'"
Matthew 7:12	"'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets."
Matthew 19:18	"He said to him, 'Which ones?' And Jesus said, 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness... ."
Luke 1:41,44	"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit... For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy."
John 7:24	"'Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgement.'"
John 10:10	"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."
Galatians 1:15	"But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace,... ."
Galatians 3:28	"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."
Revelation 7:9	"After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands."

Prophets Among Us

Abby Johnson: pro-life activist, spokesperson and author

Birth: July 10, 1980

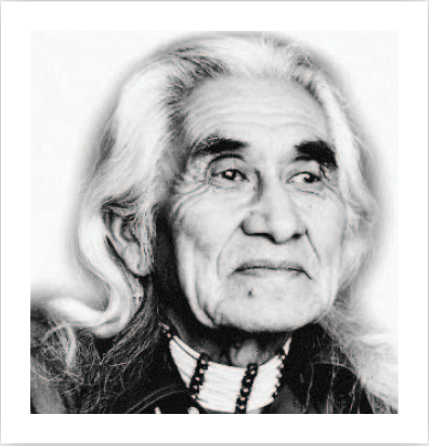
Abby Johnson is an American former clinic director of Planned Parenthood who resigned after witnessing an abortion on ultrasound. She has written two books *Unplanned and The Walls are Talking: Former Abortion Clinic Workers Tell Their Stories*. She also founded And Then There Were None, a non-profit organization that helps people who once worked in the abortion industry find new employment.

To learn more about Abby Johnson and her work visit abbyj.com/ and abortionworker.com/our-story/.

Benjamin Lay: Quaker Abolitionist

Benjamin Lay was born in 1682 to Quaker parents in Copford, England, near Colchester. As a merchant, he moved to Barbados in 1718, where he became exposed to the cruel practices of slavery and human trafficking through which many profited. He became very unpopular as he spoke out against these widely accepted practices. He did not believe humans were superior to non-human animals and protested against slavery by creating his own clothes to boycott the slave labour industry. He would not wear nor eat anything made from the loss of animal life or provided by slave labour. He continued his opposition to slavery and the human trafficking industry when he moved to the United States. However, as his position was in opposition to Quakers and most other Christians, he was unwelcome in many circles.

A prolific writer, Benjamin Lay published more than 200 pamphlets on slavery, capital punishment, the prison system and the moneyed Pennsylvania Quaker elite. He died in 1759, but his legacy continued to motivate the abolitionist movement throughout the early and mid-19th century, inspiring abolitionist Quakers to keep pictures of him in their homes.



Chief Dan George: a poet, author, activist and professor

Birth: July 24, 1899 Death: September 23, 1981

An easily recognized face in Canada, Chief Dan George was one of the first activists for Indigenous rights in Canada. He sought to increase understanding of the First Nations people among non-aboriginal Canadians. At the 1967 celebration of the Canadian centennial, he used his poem "Lament for Confederation" to draw attention to the European colonization of Canada.

To learn more about Chief Dan George visit newfederation.org/Native_Leaders/Bios/George.htm.

Photograph courtesy of Cheryl Petten (Windspeaker.com Archives)

Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ: advocate for the abolition of the death penalty

Birth: April 21, 1939

Sister Helen Prejean gained notoriety in 1995 when her best-selling book Dead Man Walking was adapted for film. Along with working to abolish the death penalty, she founded the group SURVIVE, which helps families of victims of murder and related crimes.

"The death penalty is one of the great moral issues facing our country, yet most people rarely think about it and very few of us take the time to delve deeply enough into this issue to be able to make an informed decision about it" (Sr. Helen Prejean).

To learn more about Sr. Helen Prejean, please visit sisterhelen.org/.

Laura Klassen: anti-abortion activist, founder and director of CHOICE42.

Laura Klassen uses satirical videos to inform viewers about the reality of abortion, which she shares on social media. Her website offers readers information about abortion procedures so that people can make informed decisions.

To learn more about Laura Klassen and her foundation visit choice42.com/ and twitter.com/LauraKlassen14?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor.

Mark Davis Pickup: blogger, speaker, advocate for life

In the early 1980s, Mark Pickup was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and used a wheelchair by 2003. His journey with his disease led him to advocate for the pro-life movement. He has spoken internationally, telling his story and reminding people of the dignity of every person.

To learn more about Mark Pickup visit humanlifematters.org/ and blogger.com/profile/03804926376103695762.

St. Gianna Beretta Molla: an Italian pediatrician

Birth: October 4, 1922 Death: April 28, 1962 Feast Day: April 28th

Gianna Beretta Molla was both a trained doctor and surgeon. She specialized in working with children and was drawn toward those on the fringe of society. A faithful supporter of Catholic social teaching, she generously served with Catholic Action, a group that promotes Christian values. She was a wife and mother of four. During her pregnancy with her fourth child, she discovered she had a tumour and when given the options for treatment, she chose the option that would save her baby's life. She died after delivering her fourth child.

Patron saint of mothers, physicians and unborn children.

To learn more about St. Gianna Beretta Molla visit catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=6985.

St. Maximilian Kolbe: a Polish Conventual Franciscan friar and martyr

Birth: April 21, 1939

Birth: January 8, 1894 Death: August 14, 1941 Feast Day: August 14

Maximillian Kolbe had a strong devotion to the Immaculate Virgin Mary. He received a vision from her where she offered him two crowns—a white crown that symbolized he should persevere in purity and a red crown that suggested he would be a martyr. Graciously, he accepted them both. He is best known for volunteering to take the place of another Auschwitz prisoner family man, who was sentenced to death by starvation.

Patron saint of drug addicts, prisoners, families and the pro-life movement.

To learn more about St. Maximillian Kolbe, visit catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=370.

William Wilberforce: lawyer and member of the British parliament

Birth: August 24, 1759 Death: July 29, 1833

During the Easter season of 1786, William Wilberforce experienced a spiritual rebirth and began to live as a serious Christian, abstaining from alcohol and re-accessing his political life. He became absorbed in the issue of slavery and began to work towards its abolition. In 1807 the British Empire abolished slavery due in part to his work, Thomas Clarkson and others.

For more information, visit christianitytoday.com/history/people/activists/william-wilberforce.html.

Disclaimer: All links contained within this document are current as of June 2022.

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