

CST 101 LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

A discussion guide from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services

OPENING PRAYER: Together, pray:

Eternal God, creator and sustainer of life, bless us with the courage to defend all life from conception to natural death. Bless us with the strength to respect all peoples from east to west, from north to south, so that we may truly follow the call of Jesus to be neighbor. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen

(From Being Neighbor: The Catechism and Social Justice, USCCB, April 1998)

WATCH: "CST 101 Life and Dignity of the Human Person" on YouTube.

PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE:

Read this Scripture passage twice.

Invite participants to reflect silently after it is read the first time.

"Then God said: Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth.

God created mankind in his image;
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them." *(Genesis 1:26-27)*

SHARE:

Every person is made in God's image.

- In whom is it easy to see God's image?
- Are there people who you struggle to believe are made in God's image? Why?

REFLECT ON TRADITION:

Read these passages aloud.

"Every individual, precisely by reason of the mystery of the Word of God who was made flesh (*cf. John 1:14*), is entrusted to the maternal care of the Church.

Therefore every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt in the Church's very heart; it cannot but affect her at the core of her faith in the Redemptive Incarnation of the Son of God, and engage her in her mission of proclaiming the Gospel of life in all the world and to every creature (*cf. Mark 16:15*)."



Photo courtesy of Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS

“When we speak of mankind, we must never forget the various attacks on the sacredness of human life. The plague of abortion is an attack on life. Allowing our brothers and sisters to die on boats in the Strait of Sicily is an attack on life. Dying on the job because the minimum safety standards are not respected is an attack on life. Death from malnutrition is an attack on life. Terrorism, war, violence; so is euthanasia. Loving life means always taking care of the other, wanting the best for him, cultivating and respecting her transcendent dignity.”

—Pope Francis, Address to Meeting of the Science and Life Association (see link to Pope Francis’ address in email)

DISCUSS:

- How do these passages move or challenge you?
- As people of faith who believe in Christ’s life, death and resurrection, why do we have a special call to ensure that every person’s life and dignity is respected? How can we live out this call?

ACT:

In your family, neighborhood, school or faith community, how might you be called to act with others to protect human life and dignity?

SEND:

Creator God, help us honor the dignity of all people, especially those in whom God’s face may be difficult to recognize. Inspire us to help protect human life in all its stages, at home and around the world. Amen

Visit crs.org/CST101 or wearesaltandlight.org/CST101 for all CST 101 resources, including the prayers, stories and videos linked to in these discussion guides.



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