

CHOOSING LIFE

REJECTING THE RH BILL



Catechetical Modules 2011
ON THE CBCP PASTORAL LETTER



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FOREWORD

“God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female, he created them”. (Gen. 1:27)

The greatest gift God has given to human beings is LIFE. Human life no matter what condition is of the person – rich or poor, strong or weak, learned or ignorant – is modeled after God. This is also the reason why God decreed that no one shall hurt or kill a fellow human being. (Ex. 20:13) We encourage every human being to learn how to reverence life. We have to pay attention to and look for alternative solutions to the many threats to a healthy mind and clean mental attitudes as well as to the health of human body.

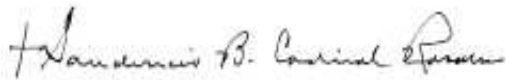
In this precarious time of our society where the value of life is threatened, the Church takes seriously its role to combat those who desecrate the sanctity of life. It is imperative that proper Gospel values be inculcated in the hearts and minds of the faithful.

The duty of the Church is to give enlightenment to those who are wavering in their belief to uphold life. This is the time that working together on the issues that are still unresolved be addressed. It is the task of the Church to lead the faithful to the truth of Christ regarding life and educate them in a more mature evangelical discernment to the respect for life. It must be a collective effort of all starting from the family to the different evangelizing sectors of our Church.

These Catechetical Modules on the CBCP Pastoral letter in response to the RH Bill aim to lead the faithful to a profound study and reflection of the RESPECT FOR LIFE. Through the initiative and direction of the Catechetical Foundation of the Archdiocese of Manila, the Catechists creatively introduce three modules for a rich, clear and fruitful discussion on the importance of life and responsible parenthood. Hence, a renewed evangelical stand may be drawn from these modules.

Let us be aware that on this endeavor, we need the Lord's assistance, to give us even more help, for on our own we can do nothing unless we abide in Him. May we be a people of prayer imploring God to enlighten all those responsible in passing the law that transgresses the reverence for the gift of life.

God bless us all!



+ Gaudencio B. Cardinal Rosales
Archbishop of Manila



ARCHDIOCESE
OF
LINGAYEN-DAGUPAN

INTRODUCTION

“The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground
blew into his nostrils the breath of life and so man
became a living being”. (Gen 2:7)

One of the characteristics that best distinguishes Catholic Christian from others is the REVERENCE FOR LIFE. While some sectors of our society rejoice with the passing of the RH Bill, the Church stood firm on her principle on the sanctity of life. The Church continues to struggle with people who seemingly value life but ultimately destroys its importance for their own vested interest. The view for the respect for life cannot just be reduced to the whims and fancies of the selfish intentions of the few. It must be perceived as a moral imperative.

According to Pope Benedict XVI, for Christians, there is a truth in understanding the value of human life that can guarantee respect for the inalienable dignity and rights of each man, woman and child in our world- including the most defenseless of all human beings, the unborn child in the mother's womb. Therefore, Christians have the obligation to share that truth with the nation and the world.

The message of the CBCP Pastoral Letter against RH Bill challenges us. This is the reason that urged the Catechetical Foundation of the Archdiocese of Manila to produce these modules. It hopes to provide materials to all those responsible in protecting life. Thus, leading all believers in parishes and schools to CHOOSE LIFE and REJECT the RH BILL.

The titles of the different modules are:

- Module 1 Wow Buhay! Life is Good!
- Module 2 A Child, a Gift or a Burden?
- Module 3 "Choosing Life, Rejecting the RH Bill"
Protect, Support and Defend life!

The different modules contain the following:

- Module 1 Wow Buhay! Life is Good!

This module presents the *first core principle commonly shared by all who believe in God* as mentioned in the CBCP Pastoral Letter dated January 31, 2011.

Human life is sacred because life comes from God. Wow buhay! Life is Good. If life is sacred... and a gift from God, He wants us to respect and protect life absolutely from the moment of conception. Because of these truths the Bishops of the Philippines strongly reject the RH Bill. The five objections of our Bishop regarding RH Bill is specifically mentioned also in this module.

Module 2 A Child, a Gift or a Burden?

This module presents the *second core principle commonly shared by all who believe in God* as mentioned in the CBCP Pastoral Letter dated January 31, 2011.

God wills all persons to share in His divine life, to become God's people. The family is the basic means for carrying out this plan, since it is "a community of persons, serving life through the procreation and education of offspring, participating in the development of society, and sharing in the mission of the church"(PCP II 575). From our cultural background, family-centeredness, we Filipinos easily accept the family as the privileged place where human life is generated, welcomed and cared for.

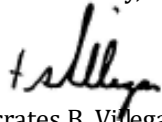
Module 3 Choosing life, Rejecting the RH Bill

This module presents that Christ who is LIFE is teaching us to be true stewards of life which answers our desire to defend and protect life as taught by the Church that we are all created in the image and likeness of God who is the Lord and creator of all and that we are given the task to govern the world with justice and holiness in spite of the advancement of technology and modernization in the world. Thus, we value and treasure life by making a stand for what is true about life and by defending it against all threats.

We hope that all those who will undergo the study and reflection of these modules will ***"pray together, reason together, decide together, act together, in the hope that the truth will prevail over the many threats to human life and to our shared human and cultural values"***. (CBCP Pastoral letter on RH Bill, January 31, 2011)

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, I thank the Catechetical Foundation of the Archdiocese of Manila for this work of love for the Church.

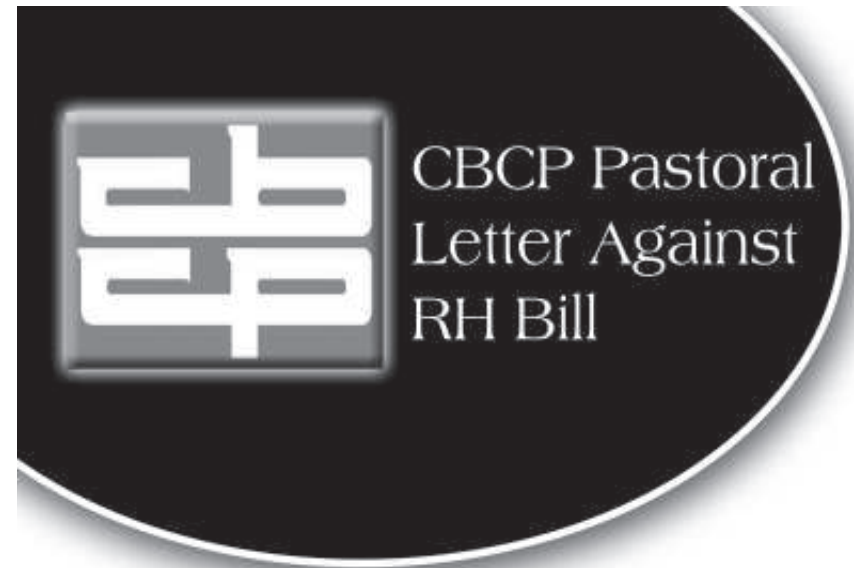
With Jesus, the Lover of Life and Mary, the Mother of Life,



+Socrates B. Villegas, DD
Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan
Chairman, ECCCE

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CHOOSING LIFE, REJECTING THE RH BILL

(A Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines)

Our Filipino Brothers and Sisters:

The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights (Art. II, Section 11). The State recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution. It shall equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception (Art. II, Section 12).

Background

We begin by citing the Philippine Constitution. We do so because we intend to write you on the basis of the fundamental ideals and aspirations of the Filipino people and not on the basis of specifically Catholic religious teachings.

We are at a crossroads as a nation. Before us are several versions of a proposed bill, the Reproductive Health bill or sanitized as a Responsible Parenthood bill. This proposed bill in all its versions calls us to make a moral choice: to choose life or to choose death.

At the outset we thank the government for affording us an opportunity to express our views in friendly dialogue. Sadly our dialogue has simply revealed how far apart our respective positions are. Therefore, instead of building false hopes, we wish at the present time to draw up clearly what we object to and what we stand for.

Moral Choices at the Crossroads — at EDSA I and Now

Twenty five years ago in 1986 we Catholic Bishops made a prophetic moral judgment on political leadership. With this prophetic declaration we believe that we somehow significantly helped open the door for EDSA I and a window of political integrity.

Today we come to a new national crossroads and we now have to make a similar moral choice. Our President rallied the country with the election cry, “Kung walang corrupt walang mahirap.” As religious leaders we believe that there is a greater form of corruption, namely, moral corruption which is really the root of all corruption. On the present issue, it would be morally corrupt to disregard the moral implications of the RH bill.

This is our unanimous collective moral judgment: We strongly reject the RH bill.

Commonly Shared Human and Cultural Values – Two Fundamental Principles

Far from being simply a Catholic issue, the RH bill is a major attack on authentic human values and on Filipino cultural values regarding human life that all of us have cherished since time immemorial.

Simply stated the RH Bill does not respect moral sense that is central to Filipino cultures. It is the product of the spirit of this world, a secularist, materialistic spirit that considers morality as a set of teachings from which one can choose, according to the spirit of the age. Some it accepts, others it does not accept. Unfortunately, we see the subtle spread of this post-modern spirit in our own Filipino society. Our position stands firmly on two of the core principles commonly shared by all who believe in God:

(1) Human life is the most sacred physical gift with which God, the author of life, endows a human being. Placing artificial obstacles to prevent human life from being formed and being born most certainly contradicts this fundamental truth of human life. In the light of the widespread influence of the post-modern spirit in our world, we consider this position as nothing less than prophetic. As religious leaders we must proclaim this truth fearlessly in season and out of season.

(2) It is parents, cooperating with God, who bring children into the world. It is also they who have the primary inalienable right and responsibility to nurture them, care for them,

and educate them that they might grow as mature persons according to the will of the Creator.

What We Specifically Object to in the RH Bill

Advocates contend that the RH bill promotes reproductive health. The RH Bill certainly does not. It does not protect the health of the sacred human life that is being formed or born. The very name “contraceptive” already reveals the anti-life nature of the means that the RH bill promotes. These artificial means are fatal to human life, either preventing it from fruition or actually destroying it. Moreover, scientists have known for a long time that contraceptives may cause cancer. Contraceptives are hazardous to a woman’s health.

Advocates also say that the RH bill will reduce abortion rates. But many scientific analysts themselves wonder why prevalent contraceptive use sometimes raises the abortion rate. In truth, contraceptives provide a false sense of security that takes away the inhibition to sexual activity. Scientists have noted numerous cases of contraceptive failure. Abortion is resorted to, an act that all religious traditions would judge as sinful. “Safe sex” to diminish abortion rate is false propaganda.

Advocates moreover say that the RH bill will prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. This goes against the grain of many available scientific data. In some countries where condom use is prevalent, HIV/ AIDS continues to spread. Condoms provide a false security that strongly entices individuals towards increased sexual activity, increasing likewise the incidence of HIV/AIDS. “Safe sex” to prevent HIV /AIDS is false propaganda.

Advocates also assert that the RH Bill empowers women with ownership of their own bodies. This is in line with the post-modern spirit declaring that women have power over their own bodies without the dictation of any religion. How misguided this so-called “new truth” is! For, indeed, as created by God our bodies are given to us to keep and nourish. We are stewards of our own bodies and we must follow God’s will on this matter according to an informed and right conscience. Such a conscience must certainly be enlightened and guided by religious and moral teachings provided by various religious and cultural traditions regarding the fundamental dignity and worth of human life.

Advocates also say that the RH bill is necessary to stop overpopulation and to escape from poverty. Our own government statistical office has concluded that there is no overpopulation in the Philippines but only the over-concentration of population in a number of urban centers. Despite other findings to the contrary, we must also consider the findings of a significant group of renowned economic scholars, including economic Nobel laureates, who have found no direct correlation between population and poverty. In fact, many Filipino scholars have concluded that population is not the cause of our poverty. The causes of our poverty are: flawed philosophies of development, misguided economic policies, greed, corruption, social inequities, lack of access to education, poor economic and social services, poor infrastructures, etc. World organizations estimate that in our country more than P400 billion pesos are lost yearly to corruption. The conclusion is unavoidable: for our country to escape from poverty, we have to address the real causes of poverty and not population.

In the light of the above, we express our clear objections:

1. We object to the non-consideration of moral principles, the bedrock of law, in legislative discussions of bills that are intended for the good of individuals and for the common good.
2. We are against the anti-life, anti-natal and contraceptive mentality that is reflected in media and in some proposed legislative bills.
3. We object strongly to efforts at railroading the passage of the RH bill.
4. We denounce the over-all trajectory of the RH bill towards population control.
5. We denounce the use of public funds for contraceptives and sterilization.
6. We condemn compulsory sex education that would effectively let parents abdicate their primary role of educating their own children, especially in an area of life – sexuality – which is a sacred gift of God.

What We Stand For

On this matter of proposed RH bills, these are our firm convictions:

1. We are deeply concerned about the plight of the many poor, especially of suffering women, who are struggling for a better life and who must seek it outside of our country, or have recourse to a livelihood less than decent.

2. We are pro-life. We must defend human life from the moment of conception or fertilization up to its natural end.
3. We believe in the responsible and natural regulation of births through Natural Family Planning for which character building is necessary which involves sacrifice, discipline and respect for the dignity of the spouse.
4. We believe that we are only stewards of our own bodies. Responsibility over our own bodies must follow the will of God who speaks to us through conscience.
5. We hold that on the choices related to the RH bill, conscience must not only be informed but most of all rightly guided through the teachings of one's faith.
6. We believe in the freedom of religion and the right of conscientious objection in matters that are contrary to one's faith. The sanctions and penalties embodied in the proposed RH bill are one more reason for us to denounce it.

Our Calls

As religious leaders we have deeply and prayerfully reflected on this burning issue. We have unanimously made the moral judgment – to reject the RH agenda and to choose life.

1. We call for a fundamental transformation of our attitudes and behavior towards all human life especially the most defenseless, namely, human life being formed or being conceived. The cheapness with which many seem to consider human life is a great bane to our religious-oriented nation.

2. We call upon our legislators to consider the RH bill in the light of the God-given dignity and worth of human life and, therefore, to shelve it completely as contrary to our ideals and aspirations as a people. We thank our legislators who have filed bills to defend human life from the moment of conception and call upon all other legislators to join their ranks.

3. We thank the great multitude of lay people all over the country, and particularly the dedicated groups who made their presence felt in the halls of Congress, to defend and promote our position. We call upon other lay people and adherents of other religions to join the advocacy to defend and promote our commonly shared ideals and aspirations.

4. We call on our government to address effectively the real causes of poverty such as corruption, lack of social and economic services, lack of access to education and the benefits of development, social inequities.

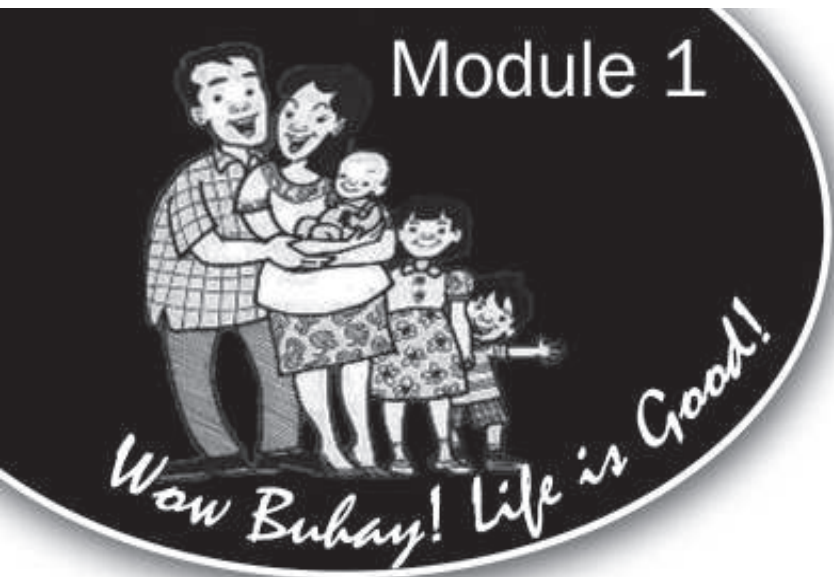
5. We call for the establishment of more hospitals and clinics in the rural areas, the deployment of more health personnel to provide more access to health services, the building of more schools, the provision of more aid to the poor for education, and the building of more and better infrastructures necessary for development.

6. We echo the challenge we prophetically uttered 25 years ago at EDSA I and call upon all people of good will who share our conviction: "...let us pray together, reason together, decide together, act together, always to the end that the truth prevail" over the many threats to human life and to our shared human and cultural values.

We commend our efforts against the RH bill (or the Responsible Parenthood bill – its new name) to the blessing of our almighty and loving God, from whom all life comes and for whom it is destined.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines.

+Nereo P. Odchimar, D.D.
Bishop of Tandag
President, CBCP
January 30, 2011



Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit

Life Situation:

- As Filipino we are noted for our love of Family. It is from our families that we first learn **respect for human life**. But in a pastoral letter a few years ago, our Bishops noted a **paradox**. “We Filipinos value life. We respect life. But if we indeed have such a high regard for life, then why is it treated **so cheaply** among us? “Napakamura ng buhay!” Why is it not given the value and respect that we say we put on it as people? How is it that in a nation that prides itself in its rich Christian heritage, **life is so cheap?**” To enumerate some specific of shocking instances of lack of respect for life:

assassinations, salvagings and liquidations by government and NPA forces, and politically motivated killings of all kinds,

Module 1 Wow Buhay! Life is Good! 11

these according to the bishops, **are a given fact** that we as Christians cannot accept. It is not right that people be killed simply because their political beliefs differ from ours.

- **PCP 2** has sketched an overall view of our socio-cultural economic and political context in “our world- the Philippines; lights and shadows. But as specifically regarding human life, besides the violence of killings, kidnappings, hostage-taking and torture that have become commonplace in the lives of so many Filipinos, we also experience at first hand the world-wide attacks on human life. On the individual personal level there is abortion, suicide, mercy killing(euthanasia), drugs and scandal. On the societal level, the ecology crisis, economic and political exploitation and the arms race, endanger the quality of countless human lives. (CFC 998-1000)
- Today one of the burning Issues that we are facing these days is on the **Reproductive Health Bill or sanitized as a Responsible Parenthood Bill**.

All these factors stress the urgent need for far greater commitment to the respect for human life enjoined by the 4th and 5th commandments. Let us save life, support and promote life!.. that is why our Bishops are clamoring for the rejection of the RH Bill . Do you know that, Last January 31, 2011 The CBCP issued a pastoral letter entitled.

CHOOSING LIFE, REJECTING THE RH BILL

In their pastoral letter they begin by citing article II, section 12 of the Philippine Constitution which stipulates ***“The state values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights (Art. II, section 11). The state recognizes the sanctity of Family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as basic autonomous social institution. It shall equally protect the life of the mother and life of the unborn from conception (Art. II, section 12).*** Ang ganda po ng sinasaad di po ba? Our Bishops begin their pastoral letter by citing this section because they intend to write on the basis of the fundamental ideals and aspirations of the Filipino people and not on the basis of specifically Catholic religious teachings. They said, ‘that our nation is at the crossroads (nasa sangandaan o intersection) , before us are the reproductive health bill or ***sanitized*** as a Responsible Parenthood bill, but this bill calls us to make a moral choice, we have to decide to make a stand: to choose life or to choose death. Our religious leaders believe that there is a greater form of corruption, namely, moral corruption which is really the root of all corruption. On the present issue, it would be morally corrupt to disregard the moral implication of the RH Bill.” The unanimous collective moral judgment of our Bishops strongly rejects the RH Bill. Why? Because their position stands firmly on two core principles commonly shared by all who believe in God:

“Human life is the most sacred physical gift with which God, the author of life, endows a human being. Placing artificial obstacles to prevent human life from being formed and being born most certainly contradicts this fundamental truth of human life.

In the light of the widespread influence of the post-modern spirit in our world, we consider this position as nothing less than prophetic. As Religious leaders we must proclaim this truth fearlessly in season and out of season”-CBCP Pastoral Letter

This is our faith!!!

Doctrine: Human life is sacred.

- Life is sacred because life comes from God.
In the book of Genesis:
“The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.”(Gen, 2:7) “Hiningahan ng Diyos ang tao sa ilong at nagkaroon ng buhay”. Wow! Buhay! Life is good!!! Ang buhay natin ay galing sa Diyos , it’s a gift from God.
From CCC:
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- (CCC 2258)

The Human Person as the “Imago Dei”

- “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.”(Gen. 1:27)

Man occupies a unique place in creation: (I) he is “in the image of God”; (II) in his own nature he unites the spiritual and material worlds; (III) he is created “male and female”; (IV) God established him in his friendship.(CCC 355)

- ***Of all the 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:

What made you establish man in so great a dignity? Certainly the **incalculable love** by which you have looked on your creature in yourself! You are taken with love for her; for by love indeed you created her, by love you have given her a being capable of tasting your eternal Good.(CCC 356)

- 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. (CCC 357)

- *The fundamental message of Sacred Scripture proclaims that the human person is a creature of God (cf. Ps 139:14-18), and sees in his being in the image of God the element that characterizes and distinguishes him: “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27). God places the human creature at the centre and summit of the created order. Man (in Hebrew, “adam”) is formed from the earth (“adamah”) and God blows into his nostrils the breath of life (cf. Gen 2:7). Therefore, **“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. Further, 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”. (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church 108.)*

- **Man and woman have the same dignity and are of equal value, not only because they are both, in their differences, created in the image of God, but even more profoundly because the dynamic of reciprocity that gives life to the “we” in the human couple, is an image of God.**

In a relationship of mutual communion, man and woman fulfil themselves in a profound way, rediscovering themselves as persons through the sincere gift of themselves[213]. Their covenant of union is presented in Sacred Scripture as an image of the Covenant of God with man (cf. Hos 1-3; Is 54; Eph 5:21-33) and, at the **same time**, as a service to life[214]. Indeed, the human couple can participate in God’s act of creation: “God blessed them, and **God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it’**” (*Gen 1:28*). Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church 111.

If life is sacred...and a gift from God...

Moral:

- God wants us to respect and protect life absolutely from the moment of conception. That’s why he gave us a command: “Thou shall not kill.”- (Ex. 20:13) You *have* heard **that it was said to the men of old, “You shall not kill and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.”- (Mat. 5:21-22)**

- **“The innocent and the just you shall not put to death.”(Exodus 23:7)**
- **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.* (CCC 2270)**
- 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. (CCC 2271)
- **Man and woman are in relationship with others above all as those *to whom the lives of others have been entrusted.* “For your lifeblood I will surely require a **reckoning**, ... I will require it ... of man [and] of every man’s brother” (*Gen 9:5*), God tells Noah after the flood. In this perspective, the relationship with **God requires that the life of man be considered sacred and inviolable.** The fifth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill” (*Ex 20:13; Deut 5:17*),**

has validity because **God alone is Lord of life and death**. The respect owed to the inviolability and integrity of physical life finds its climax in the positive commandment: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (*Lev 19:18*), by which Jesus enjoins the obligation to tend to the needs of one’s neighbour (cf. *Mt 22:37-40; Mk 12:29-31; Lk 10:27-28*). (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church 112).

- **With this specific vocation to life**, man and woman find themselves also in the presence of all the other creatures. They can and are obliged to put them at their own service and to enjoy them, but their dominion over the world **requires the exercise of responsibility**, it is not a freedom of arbitrary and selfish exploitation. All of creation in fact has value and is “good” (cf. *Gen 1:4,10,12,18,21,25*) in the sight of God, who is its author. **Man must discover and respect its value. This is a marvellous challenge to his intellect**, which should lift him up as on wings [218] towards the contemplation of the truth of all God’s creatures, that is, the contemplation of what God sees as *good* in them.

The Book of Genesis teaches that human dominion over the world consists in *naming things* (cf. *Gen 2:19-20*). In giving things their names, man must recognize them for what they are and establish with each of them a relationship of responsibility[219]. (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church 113.)

Because of these truths... the Bishops of the Philippines strongly reject the RH Bill. In their pastoral letter they stated that “RH bill is a major attack on authentic human values and on Filipino cultural values regarding human life. RH Bill does not respect moral sense that is central to Filipino cultures. These are the areas that our Bishops objected to in the RH Bill

| RH Bill | The study done by the CBCP |
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| 1. Advocates contend that the RH Bill promotes reproductive health | It does not protect the health of the sacred human life that is being formed or born. The very name "contraceptive" already reveals the anti-life nature of the means that the RH bill promotes. These artificial means are fatal to human life, either preventing it from fruition or actually destroying it. Moreover, scientists have known for a long time that contraceptives may cause cancer. Contraceptives are hazardous to a woman's health. |

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| <p>2. Advocates also say that the RH bill will reduce abortion rates.</p> | <p>But many scientific analysts themselves wonder why prevalent contraceptive use sometimes raises the abortion rate. In truth, contraceptives provide a false sense of security that takes away the inhibition to sexual activity. Scientists have noted numerous cases of contraceptive failure. Abortion is resorted to, an act that all religious traditions would judge as sinful. "Safe sex" to diminish abortion rate is false propaganda.</p> |
| <p>3. Advocates moreover say that the RH Bill will prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.</p> | <p>This goes against the grain of many available scientific data. In some countries where condom use is prevalent, HIV/AIDS continues to spread. Condoms provide a false security that strongly entices individuals towards increased sexual activity, increasing likewise the incidence of HIV/AIDS. "Safe Sex" to prevent HIV/AIDS is false propaganda</p> |
| <p>4. Advocates also assert that the RH Bill empowers women with ownership of their own bodies. This is in line with the post-modern spirit declaring that women have power over their own bodies without the dictation of any religion.</p> | <p>How misguided this so-called "new truth" is! For, indeed, as created by God our bodies are given to us to keep and nourish. We are stewards of our own bodies and we must follow God's will on this matter according to an informed and right conscience. Such a conscience must certainly be enlightened and guided by religious and moral teachings provided by various religious and cultural traditions regarding the fundamental dignity and worth of human life.</p> |

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| <p>5. Advocates also say that the RH bill is necessary to stop overpopulation and to escape from poverty.</p> | <p>Our own government statistical office has concluded that there is no overpopulation in the Philippines but only the over-concentration of population in a number of urban centers. Despite other findings to the contrary, we must also consider the findings of a significant group of renowned economic scholars, including economic Nobel laureates, who have found no direct correlation between population and poverty. In fact, many Filipino scholars have concluded that population is not the cause of our poverty. The causes of our poverty are: flawed philosophies of development, misguided economic policies, greed, corruption, social inequities, lack of access to education, poor economic and social services, poor infrastructures, etc. World organizations estimate that in our country more than P400 billion pesos are lost yearly to corruption. The conclusion is unavoidable: for our country to escape from poverty, we have to address the real causes of poverty and not population".</p> |
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In the light of the above, we express our clear objections:

1. We object to the non-consideration of moral principles, the bedrock of law, in legislative discussions of bills that are intended for the good of individuals and for the common good.
2. We are against the anti-life, anti-natal and contraceptive mentality that is reflected in media and in some proposed legislative bills.
3. We object strongly to efforts at railroading the passage of the RH bill.
4. We denounce the over-all trajectory of the RH bill towards population control.
5. We denounce the use of public funds for contraceptives and sterilization.
6. We condemn compulsory sex education that would effectively let parents abdicate their primary role of educating their own children, especially in an area of life – sexuality – which is a sacred gift of God- (CBCP Pastoral Letter, January 31, 2011)

As our Bishops have deeply and prayerfully reflected on these burning issues, let us join them in praying, so that this moral corruption will not prevail in our country.

Worship: As members of the church let us all pray: **But deliver us from evil.** Amen.

When we ask to be delivered from the evil one, we pray as well to be freed from all evils, present, past and future, of which he is the author or instigator. In this final petition, the Church brings before the Father all the distress of the world. Along with deliverance from the evils that overwhelm humanity, she implores the precious gift of peace and the grace of perseverance in expectation of Christ's return. (CCC 2854)

Because of the evils and injustices that all war brings with it, we must do everything reasonably possible to avoid it. The church prays: "From famine, pestilence and war, O lord deliver us."- (CCC 2327)

Ganito po sana ang maging panalangin natin para sa mga pinuno ng ating bansa at sa ating mga mambabatas:

We pray for our leaders and legislators who must deliberate assiduously on this critical present issue. May they be guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit to act responsibly for the good and well being of all. May their competence be steered by humility and fear of the Lord.

The continuous clamor of our bishops, ***“We echo the challenge we prophetically uttered 25 years ago at EDSA I and call upon all people of good will who share our conviction: “...let us pray together, reason together, decide together, act together, always to the end that the truth prevail” over the many threats to human life and to our shared human and cultural values.***

We commend our efforts against the RH bill (or the Responsible Parenthood bill – its new name) to the blessing of our almighty and loving God, from whom all life comes and for whom it is destined”.-(CBCP Pastoral Letter, January 31, 2011 choosing life, rejecting the RH Bill)

What is our Response?

Do you value your life? How do you respect, protect, support, promote and serve your life? The life of others?

How will you respond to the challenge of our Bishops regarding this burning issue on RH Bill?

Celebration: Let us all pray

ORATIO IMPERATA FOR THE RESPECT OF ALL HUMAN LIFE

God, our loving Father,
Creator and lover of all life,
You fashioned in your own image and likeness every human person.
We thank you for this gift and the freedom to appreciate it.
Grant us intense eagerness to recognize your image in every

person so that respect for all human life becomes our way of life.
Give us also the strength and courage
to defend and protect the right of all to live as you ordained,
from conception to natural death.

We pray for your divine healing, comfort and peace
for all affected by past abortions.
Grant them strength and the consolation of your presence.
Help us serve actively in alleviating the sufferings and troubles
of all women with pregnancy problems.
Let your Spirit enlighten the minds and open the hearts
of those who do not yet fully respect all human life
according to your will.

We pray for all our leaders and legislators
who must deliberate assiduously on this critical present issue.
May they be guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit
to act responsibly for the good and well-being of all.
May their competence be always steered
by humility and fear of the Lord.

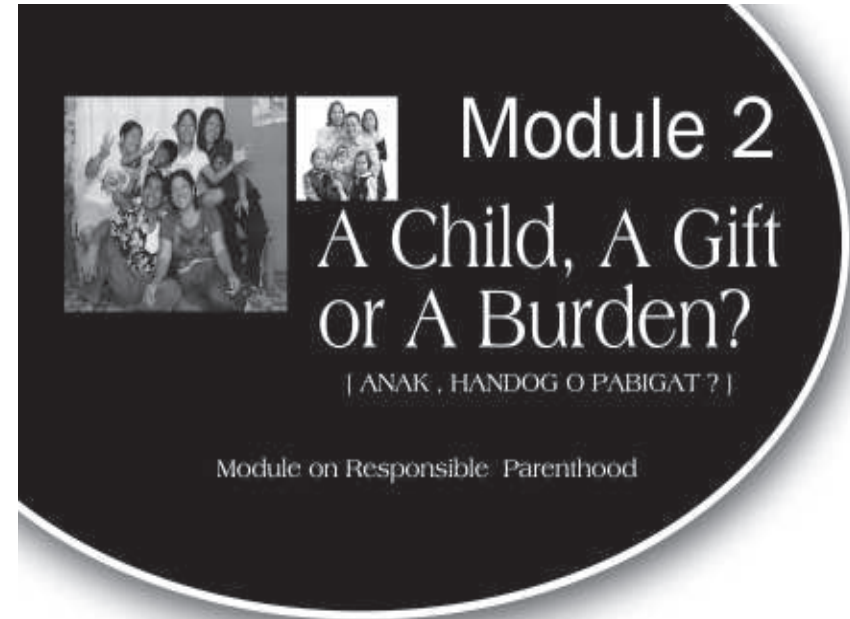
Mary, our loving Mother, to you we entrust the cause of life.
*Grant that all who believe in your Son
may proclaim the Gospel of Life with honesty and love to the people of
our time.*

26 *Module 1 Wow Buhay! Life is Good!*

We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.
Saint Rosa of Lima, pray for us.
Saint Lorenzo Ruiz, pray for us.

Closing Song: Sino Ako



OPENING PRAYER : [*Note : to prayed preferably in front of the image of the Holy Family*]

Prayer for the Family

Lord God, from you every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. Father, you are Love and Life. Through your Son, Jesus Christ, born of a woman, and through the Holy Spirit, fountain of divine charity, grant that every family on earth may become for each successive generation a true shrine of life and love.



Grant that your grace may guide the thoughts and actions of husbands and wives for the good of their families and of all the families in the world.

Grant that the young may find in the family solid support for their human dignity and for their growth in truth and love.

Grant that love, strengthened by the grace of the sacrament of marriage, may prove mightier than all the weakness and trials through which our families sometimes pass.

Through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that the Church may fruitfully carry out her worldwide mission in the family and through the family.

Through Christ our Lord, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life for ever and ever. Amen.

I. SEE [LIFE SITUATION]

A) ACTIVITY # 1

Please answer the following questions :

1. How many children did your grandparents have ?
2. How many are you in the family ?
3. How many children do your siblings have ?
4. If you are married, how many children do you have ?
5. For those who are still single, how many children would you want to have when you get married? Why ?

Get their answers - SAMPLE

| Grandparents Father side | Grandparents Mother side | My Family Brothers and Sisters | My Brother's Family | My Sister's Family | My Family Sons and Daughters |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 11 | 13 | 10 | 1 | 3 | 4 |

- **Analyze the data**
- **What is the real problem in our country, is it really over population or economy ?**

B) ACTIVITY # 2

What can you say or what is your opinion on the following statements :

- 1) As Filipinos we are noted for our love of family. Our lives, everything we are and have, are due ultimately to our birth, upbringing and support of our families
- 2) It is from our families that we first learn respect for human life.
- 3) Large families are signs of God's blessings and the parents' generosity.
- 4) We, Filipinos, value life; we respect life; we indeed have such a high regard for life. Why, then, (nowadays) we regard it so cheaply?

Summarize their answers :

God wills all persons to share in His divine life, to become God's people. The family is the basic means for carrying out this plan, since it is "a community of persons, serving life through the procreation and education of offspring, participating in the development of society, and sharing in the mission of the Church" (PCP II 575). From our cultural background, family-centeredness, we Filipinos easily accept the family as the privileged place where human life is generated, welcomed, and cared for.

For us Filipinos, children are gifts from God. Let us try go back to our own experiences ... When a baby in the family is born, isn't it that we are all very happy, excited and very grateful to God?

For the whole family, especially to the parents of the child, it is a very special moment in their life. Then came the 2nd, the 3rd and the 4th child. Is the feeling the same? Are we still happy? Is the 4th or the 5th child still a gift or a burden to the family. Another mouth to feed, to dress, to send to school?

II. JUDGE – [WORD OF GOD / TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH / INTEGRATION]

a) **Word of God : Psalm 127 3-4**

Children are gifts from the Lord ; they are a blessing.

The sons a man has when he is young are like arrows in a soldier's hand .

Happy is the man who has many such arrows.

He will never be defeated when he meets his enemies in the place of judgment.

b) **Teachings of the Church**

Catechism of the Catholic Church

In creating men 'male and female', God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity. Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God. Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God , with equal dignity though in a different way. The *union of man and woman* in marriage is a way of imitating in the flesh the Creator's generosity and fecundity : "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh". All human generations proceed from this union. [Catechism of the Catholic Church 2334-35]

The entire Christian life bears the mark of the spousal love of Christ and the Church. Already Baptism, the entry into the People of God, is a nuptial mystery; it is so to speak the nuptial bath which precedes the wedding feast, the Eucharist. Christian marriage in its turn becomes an efficacious sign,

the sacrament of the covenant of Christ and the Church. Since it signifies and communicates grace, Marriage between baptized persons is a true sacrament of the new Covenant. [Catechism of the Catholic Church 1617]

By its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the protection and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory. [Catechism of the Catholic Church 1652]

Fecundity is a gift, an end of marriage, for conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful. A child does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfillment. So the Church, which “is on the side of life” teaches that each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life. [Catechism of the Catholic Church 2366]

Called to give life, spouses share in the creative power and fatherhood of God. Married couples should regard it as their proper mission to transmit human life, and to educate their children ; they should realize that they are thereby cooperating with the love of God the Creator and are, in a certain sense, its interpreters. They will fulfill this duty with a sense of human and Christian responsibility . [Catechism of the Catholic Church 2367]

Regulation of Births [Catechism of the Catholic Church 2368]

1) Spouses may wish to space the births of their children

“ It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by selfishness but it is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood.”

2) Spouses, should conform their behavior to the objective criteria of morality.

“ When it is a question of harmonizing married love with responsible transmission of life, the morality of the behavior does not depend on sincere intention and evaluation of motives alone, but it must be determined by objective criteria, criteria drawn from the nature of the person and his acts—criteria that respects the total meaning of self giving and human procreation in the context of true love. This is possible only in the virtue of married chastity practices with sincerity of heart”

Periodic continence, that is, the method of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods, are in conformity with the objective criteria of morality. These methods respect the bodies of the spouses, encourage tenderness between them and favor the education of an authentic freedom.

In contrast “every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible” is intrinsically evil.

[Catechism of the Catholic Church 2370]

Let all be convinced that human life and the duty of transmitting it are not limited by the horizons of this life only: their true evaluation and full significance can be understood only in reference to *man's eternal destiny*. [Catechism of the Catholic Church 2371]

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

Marriage is ordered to the procreation and education of children. The marriage union, in fact, gives fullness of life to that sincere gift of self, the fruit of which are children, who in turn are a gift for the parents, for the whole family and all of society. [Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church 218]

Procreation expresses the social subjectivity of the family and sets in motion a dynamism of love and solidarity between the generations upon which society is founded. It is necessary to rediscover the social value of that portion of the common good inherent in each new human being. Every child “becomes a gift to its brothers, sisters, parents and entire family. Its life becomes a gift for the very people who were givers of life and who cannot help but feel its presence, its sharing in their life and its contribution to their common good and to that of the community of the family. [Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church 230]

In God’s plan — the couple constitutes “the first form of communion between persons.” Eve is created like Adam as the one who, in her otherness completes him (cf. Gen 2:18) in order to form with him “one flesh” (Gen 2:24; cf Mt. 19: 5-6).

At the same time, both are involved in the work of procreation, which makes them co-workers with the Creator: “ Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Gen 1: 28) . The family is presented, in the Creator’s plan, as the” primary place of ‘*humanization*’ for the person and the society and the cradle of life and love.” [Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church 209]

The human being is made for love and cannot live without love. When it is manifested as the total gift of two persons in their complementarities, love cannot be reduced to emotions or feelings, much less to mere sexual expression. In a society that tends more and more to relativize and trivialize the very experience of love and sexuality, exalting its fleeting aspects and obscuring its fundamental values, it is more urgent than ever to proclaim and bear witness that *the truth* of conjugal love and sexuality exist where there is a full and total gift of persons, with the characteristics of *unity* and *fidelity*. [Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church 223]

Parents, as ministers of life, must never forget that the spiritual dimension of procreation is to be given greater consideration than any other aspect: “Fatherhood and motherhood represent a responsibility which is not simply physical but spiritual in nature; indeed, through these realities there passes the genealogy of the person, which has its eternal beginning in God and which must lead back to him”[537]. Welcoming human life in the unified aspects of its physical and spiritual dimensions, families contribute to the “communion of generations” and in this way provide essential and irreplaceable support for the development of society. For this reason, “the family has a right to assistance by society in the bearing and rearing of children.

Those married couples who have a large family have a right to adequate aid and should not be subjected to discrimination” [Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church 237]

Catechism for Filipino Catholics

St. Paul used this text [Genesis 2: 24] to teach that Christian marriage takes on a new meaning. It symbolizes the intimate relationship between Christ and the Church. “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved his Church. He gave himself up for her.....This Pauline image of Christian marriage rests firmly on the conviction that our bodies are members of Christ. [Catechism for Filipino Catholics 1079]

Christian marriage and family life are said to constitute the Church in miniature, the “domestic Church” . *For from the marriage of Christians there comes the family in which new citizens of human society are born and, by the grace of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, these are made children of God so the People of God may be perpetuated through the centuries”(LG11).* [Catechism for Filipino Catholics 1904]

C) Integration (Interplay of Gospel and Life)

This year is the 25th anniversary of EDSA 1. Twenty five years ago in 1986 our Catholic Bishops made a prophetic moral judgment on political leadership. Today we come to a new national crossroads and we now have to make a similar moral choice. Let us be aware of this subtle attack on our families.

Let us go back to the *Life Situation* we have discussed awhile ago. What is the real problem in our country; is it really over population or our economy? Our President rallied the country with the election cry, “*Kung walang corrupt walang mahirap.*” Our religious leaders believe that there is a greater form of corruption, namely, moral corruption which is really the root of all corruption. On the present issue, it would be morally corrupt to disregard the moral implications of the RH bill (Responsible Parenthood Bill).

God has a very beautiful plan for us, to share in His divine life, to become God’s people. The family is the basic means for carrying out this plan. The family is the cradle of life and love. Couples are called to give life and to share in the creative power and fatherhood of God.

To all the couples who are here now , do you still remember the promise you made to God and the priest officiating your marriage, that you will accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church? [*The facilitator may share to the group part of the Rite of Marriage # 23 & 24*]

RITE OF MARRIAGE

23. All stand, including the bride and bridegroom, and the Priest addresses them in these or similar words: My dear friends **At the discretion of the priest, other words which seem more suitable under the circumstances, such as friends,**

or dearly beloved or brethren may be used. This also applies to parallel instances in the liturgy, you have come together in this church so that the Lord may seal and strengthen your love in the presence of the Church's minister and this community. Christ abundantly blesses this love. He has already consecrated you in baptism and now he enriches and strengthens you by a special sacrament so that you may assume the duties of marriage in mutual and lasting fidelity. And so, in the presence of the Church, I ask you to state your intentions.

QUESTIONS :

24. The priest then questions them about their freedom of choice, faithfulness to each other, and the acceptance and upbringing of children:

N. and N., have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?

Will you love and honor each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives?

Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

Each answers the questions separately

Children are a gift from the Lord ; they are a blessing. Having another child in the family is a gift from God . Every child which is the fruit of the *union of man and woman* in marriage is a way of imitating in the flesh the Creator's generosity and fecundity . Another child in the family is not a burden; therefore, God will not abandon our families (Hebrews 13: 5 "I will never forsake you or abandon you" . He will take care of us. Let us trust in Him. With God nothing is impossible.

III. ACT [CHALLENGE]

The former proposed bill was called *Reproductive Health Bill* or RH bill, now they changed it to *Responsible Parenthood Bill*. What do you think is the reason?

Let us read and study well the new bill , is it really for *responsible parenthood*?

The Bishops and a large number of lay persons still reject the new bill. Why ? Because the dialogues with the government simply revealed how far apart our respective positions are.

Art. II, Section 12 of the new Constitution indicate that " *The State recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution. It shall equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception* ". How come, then, that the alternative methods of family planning that they are advocating / promoting are not protecting the life of the mother and the life of the unborn child?

To all the parents and parents to be..... our Bishops, in their latest Pastoral Letter entitled CHOOSING LIFE, REJECTING THE RH BILL are once more reminding us that “ *it is parents, cooperating with God, who bring children into the world. It is also they who have the primary inalienable right and responsibility to nurture them, care for them, and educate them that they might grow as mature persons according to the will of the Creator.*

Let us continue praying for our legislators. Let us continue praying for all the parents and parents to be in our country. Let us continue praying for every child that will be born in the family. Let us welcome them in our family.

CELEBRATION : CLOSING SONG

ONLY SELFLESS LOVE

*Today, in the world where life is born
There's a struggle that is fought
To be welcomed, to be cared for, to be at home*

*Today, when our life seems bought and used
There's a struggle to belong to be free
And to be a gift to everyone*

REFRAIN:

*We call all families
Rise up and raise your hands as one
Come show the world, the loving ones
All God's children into one*

*We call all families
Share the treasure that's in your hands
One can save us now, one can lead us now
One can make us all be one*

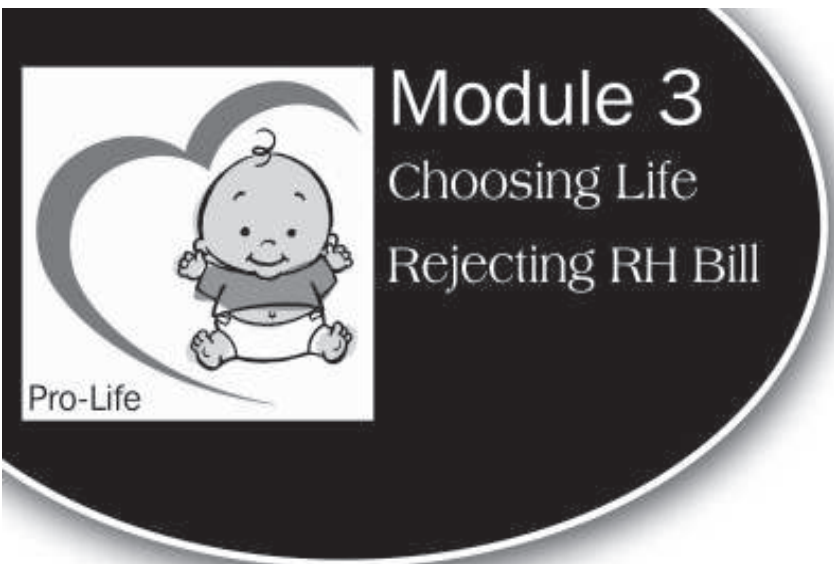
CHORUS:

*Only selfless love, Jesus showed the world
That only selfless love can bring a hundred fold
Of father's mother's sister's homes
Where peace and mercy reign
Where faith in hope remain
Where life begins and ends in God's embrace
Calling all families, let's make it happen
Only selfless love*

*Like the holy family with Jesus, Joseph and Mary
Home is where true love begins
Love rejoices, love embraces*

*Repeat REFRAIN
Repeat CHORUS except last line*

*Calling all families, let's make it happen
Through only selfless love*



PROTECT, SUPPORT AND DEFEND LIFE!

Opening Prayer:

Saint Michael the Archangel,
 defend us in battle.
 Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil.
 May God rebuke him, we humbly pray;
 and do Thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host -
 by the Divine Power of God -
 cast into hell, satan and all the evil spirits,
 who roam throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls.
 Amen.

Phase I. Human Situation

Confusion on what or who to follow with regards to the issue of reproductive health bill

Activity: The facilitator may choose either of the two Activities

A. Brainstorming

1. Are you aware of the issue on the Reproductive Health Bill? Yes/ No
2. What do you know or have been hearing about the RH Bill now known as the Responsible Parenthood Bill?
3. What can you say about the Church's intervention on the issue of RH Bill?
4. Why do you think the Church is preventing the approval of this Bill?
5. Where do you stand in the midst of all this?

B. Recall and give your Reaction on the current scenarios

1. What can you say about the recent news on aborted babies being found in the garbage or being left in an airplane by unknown parents?
2. How do you feel about these current issues or eventualities?

Phase II. Values [need to defend and protect life]

LINKAGE: From your responses we can discover that each one of us is being affected by these issues in one way or another. Some of us can even identify themselves from what we are talking about or maybe we are also in the point of confusion of who to follow.

Discovery of the Value:

Lead Question: But what do your responses or reactions in the given situation tell about you?

Possible Learners Responses:

- That I need to be enlightened
- I need to know the truth about the RH Bill
- I am called to do something about it
- I am affected by the truths of this situation
- I need guidance in this issue
- I cannot be silent with all these untoward incidents and threats to life that are happening

Affirmation of the Value:

So from your responses we can say that each one of us still **desires to defend and protect life**

*Appreciation of the Value:***Lead Questions:**

What becomes of you if you know how to defend and value life?

Possible Learners' Responses:

- I can be an inspiration to others in protecting and valuing life.
- I become careful with the choices I make in life.
- I become cautious with the products endorsed by media.
- I learn how to live a healthy lifestyle.
- I become caring and helpful to those who are in need
- I become generous in sharing both my material and non-material giftedness.
- I'll fight for life and stop all threats to life.
- I'll take care of myself and that of others.

What becomes of your relationship with others if you know how to defend and protect life?

Possible Learners' Responses:

- I become sensitive to the needs of others.
- I become caring and loving towards others.
- Others may approach me for advices or consultation.
- I become approachable.
- I become responsible towards other.

Deeper appreciation of the Value

Lead Question: What will you do to show that you are really defending and valuing life?

Possible Learners' Responses:

- Be aware of what is happening around.
- Be involved in the organization or groups defending and promoting life.
- I have to take care of myself against vices.
- Be a good steward of all creations.
- Involve oneself to works of assisting or helping those in dire need .
- Be an instrument in educating people in the values of life.

*Purification of the untoward or negative responses***Lead Questions:**

Do you think that by paying a deaf ear to what is happening around us now would help in defending and valuing life? NO!

What will you do to overcome such threats to life as shown in the media and in our own experiences?

Possible Learners' Responses:

- I must not pay a deaf ear to what is happening around us.
- Organize groups that will be agent of promoting life.
- Use the cyberspace or internet in the promotion of life.
- I will guide my children in their choice of TV programs.
- As a parent, I'll be my children's teacher and adviser.
- I will try my very best to give my children good education.

LINKAGE: And so we come to realize that each one of us have that responsibility to value, protect and promote life. We are being challenged to remove that mentality that as long as it does not affect you personally you are safe. We have to come to the discovery that we are responsible for one another. We cannot keep ourselves distant from the issues affecting life for we have been entrusted by the Giver of Life to be stewards of it.

Phase III – Discovery of the Christian Message

Evoking a sense of inability

Lead Questions

Do you think that by yourself you can attain that value of defending and protecting life when difficulties come? NO!

Who then can really help you defend and protect life when difficulties come?

- Government and non-government health agencies
- doctors and nurses
- parents
- family and relatives

But when all these peoples or agencies have gone, who do you think will really help us realize and discover the real value of life and why do we have to defend and protect it?

- God! / Jesus!

LINKAGE: Yes! You are right in saying that when everyone or everything seems to be gone it is God or Jesus alone who can direct us to the real defending and protection of life.

Process of Integration of the values with the Christian Message

Lead Questions:

How does God look upon your desire of defending and protecting life?

Possible Learners' Responses:

- He gives me the intellect to discover or realize which is good and bad for us humans and the life we have.
- God is giving us people who are models of valuing life.
- Jesus Himself showed an example of caring for life as he heals many people when he was still with us.
- Jesus told his disciples to heal the sick.
- God has given us the 5th Commandment when followed makes us carers and promoters of life.
- Maybe God is pleased with me for I am defending life against all threats.

How does your defending and protecting life fit into God's plan?

Possible Learners' Response:

- Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you..."
- The 5th Commandments tells us that we should not kill.

Another way of saying we should defend and protect life

- God the Father himself is the Author of life and so we have no authority in whatsoever to waste and neglect our gift of life.
- Jesus himself said, "I have come so that you may have life and have it to the full."

HINT: From the very beginning of our discussion, God is already revealing a message to us...

EVOKE: What do you think is the message of God for us today? (*this is an invitation for the participants to be silent; they don't necessarily need to answer but this is to prepare for the proclamation of the Christian message*)

PROCLAIM the Christian Message:

Christ who is life is teaching me how to be a true steward of life which answers my desire to defend and protect life as taught by the Church that we are all created in the image and likeness of God who is the Lord and Creator of all and that we are given the task to govern the world with justice and holiness in spite of the advancement of technology and modernization of the world and so I will value and treasure life by making a stand for what is true about life and by defending it against all threats.

Explanation:

We have learned from our previous discussions that we people are created in the image and likeness of God and is given responsibilities towards the things God entrusted to us.

Basically, we have to care for life and be defenders of life for it is said in the Sacred Scripture:

"God created man in his image: in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth." **[Genesis 1: 27-28]**

Our very calling is to be stewards of life. Jesus himself showed unto us how it is to care for life. When he was still with us he cared for the sick and healed them. He fed those who are hungry, he give hope to people who are considered outcast of the society and those who mourn, the children and the widow who found their worth in the eyes of Jesus but considered as second class citizens.

In other words, Jesus gives meaning and value to all people. He values them and gives them life – meaning in their lives. That is why we are being called to be mindful of people – not just for the good of one self but for the common good. One must work not only to satisfy oneself at the extent of stepping on the others' rights. We have to realize that whatever we do, say and think of, will always affect others. That's why Jesus himself is telling us:

Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you...

"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst..." **[John 6:27; 35]**

What does this mean? We have to learn to TRUST in God's providence, love and care for all of us though we have this Filipino saying: "*Nasa tao ang gawa nasa Diyos and awa.*" Now, in our society... the only thing that people know is that "nasa tao ang gawa!" . *Nawala na ang Diyos sa kamalayan ng marami sa atin.* We become slaves of "WORK" for survival. We become unmindful of the others, as long as we can satisfy our needs and wants.

Insensitivity at times also eats us because we are so focused on what we can gain or get from the others. And then we claim, we are the masters of our selves and so we have the freedom to do what we want and be what we'd like to be without minding other people. But what is freedom? How should one handle or make use of his/her freedom?

The value and limits of freedom

Man can turn to good only in freedom, which God has given to him as one of the highest signs of his image: "For God has willed that man remain 'under the control of his own decisions' (Sir. 15:14), so that he can seek his Creator spontaneously, and come freely to utter and blissful perfection through loyalty to Him. Hence, man's dignity demands that he act according to a knowing and free choice that is personally motivated and prompted from within, neither under blind internal impulse nor by mere external pressure. **[Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, #135]**

In the exercise of their freedom, men and women perform morally good acts that are constructive for the person and for society when they are obedient to truth, that is, when they do not presume to be the creators and absolute masters of truth or of ethical norms. **[Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, # 138]**

Let us take for example concrete ways where we abuse our freedom. The issue on abortion, killings of innocent people, daily accidents, drug abuse, corruption, etc., what can you say about these issues? Why do you think these things are happening? How are you affected by all of these? *(The catechists may entertain responses from the participants and must summarize them.)*

That is why the Church is very strong in its teachings:

And so we would like to speak to Rulers of Nations, because to them most of all is committed the responsibility of safeguarding the common good, and they can contribute so much to the preservation of morals. Do not ever allow the morals of your Peoples to be undermined. Do not tolerate any legislation which would introduce onto the family practices which are opposed to the natural and divine law – for the family is the primary unit in the State. For there are other ways by which a Government can and should solve the population problem – that is to say by enacting laws which will assist families and by educating the people wisely so that the moral law and the freedom of the citizens are both safeguarded. **[Vatican II, Vol. 2, The Regulation of Birth, #23]**

“Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever 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 circumstances claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being.”
[CCC, #2258]

Let us now see how Jesus himself taught the people in his time on how should one care for life... *(The catechist now narrates the story of the Parable of the Good Samaritan)*

Christian Event:

Title: The Parable of the Good Samaritan
Source: Luke 10: 29-37
Point of Stress: Jesus calls us to be always ready to be of service to others – defending and caring for life without counting the cost and with all your strength.

The catechist then moves on to citing this event in the life of Jesus where the innocent infants’ lives are threatened due to Herod’s hunger for power and so Mary and Joseph showed to us and example of defending and protecting life.

Christian Celebration:

Holy Innocents Day – December 28
Point of Stress: Reminds us of the importance of defending life especially of the innocent threatened by those who are in power.

Integration:

Doctrinal Dimension:

Dignity of the Human Person – The human person participates in the light and power of the divine Spirit. By his reason, he is capable of understanding the order of things established by the Creator. By free will, he is capable of directing himself toward his true good. He finds his perfection “in seeking and loving what is true and good”
[CCC, 1704]

Worship Dimension:

Sacrament of Matrimony: Family Planning – The Church teaches the need for responsible parenthood (cf. CCC 2368-72, 2399). This means, among other things, that couples should bring into the world generously only the children whom they can raise up as good human beings. The decision on the number of children RESTS SOLELY ON THE PARENTS – no one can make that decision for them. But it is a decision they must make ACCORDING TO THEIR FORMED CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE, “with a sense of their responsibility to each other, to their children already born and still to be born, to God,” and in view of the Church’s teachings. **[CFC, 1923]**

Moral Dimension:

CBCP Pastoral Letter: Choosing Life, Rejecting The RH Bill – January 30, 2011

Where we stand form: 6 Firm Convictions!

1. We are deeply concerned about the plight of the many poor, especially of suffering women

who are struggling for a better life and who must seek it outside of our country, or have recourse to a livelihood less than decent.

2. We are pro-life. We must defend human life from the moment of conception or fertilization up to its natural end.

3. We believe in the responsibility and natural regulation of births through Natural Family Planning for which character building is necessary which involves sacrifice, discipline and respect for the dignity of the spouses.

4. We believe that we are only stewards of our own bodies. Responsibility over our own bodies must follow the will of God who speaks to us through conscience.

5. We hold that on the choices related to the RH bill, conscience must not only be informed but most of all rightly guided through the teachings of one's faith.

6. We believe in the freedom of religion and right of conscientious objection in matters that are contrary to one's faith. The sanctions and penalties embodied in the proposed RH bill are one more reason for us to denounce it.

Phase IV – Challenge and Evaluation

The catechists must summarize first what had happened from Phase I, II to III...

Lead Questions:

1. What have you realized from our discussion today?
2. How would you respond to the challenges we are facing now especially with the call of the Church to Choose life, rejecting RH Bill?
3. What would you do in concrete to protect, defend and promote life?

Final Activity: “Slogan Making”

1. Group the participants with 4 members each.
2. Let them come up with a one liner slogan or saying as to how they will promote life.
3. Assign or put up a “Board for Life” where all their compositions will be posted.

CLOSING Prayer:

Prayer for Life to Our Lady of Guadalupe

Oh Mary, Mother of Jesus and Mother of Life,
We honor you as Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Thank you for pointing us to Jesus your Son,
The only Savior and hope of the world.

Renew our hope in him,
That we all may have the courage to say Yes to life,
And to defend those children in danger of abortion.

Give us your compassion
To reach out to those tempted to abort,
And to those suffering from a past abortion.

Lead us to the day when abortion
Will be a sad, past chapter in our history.

Keep us close to Jesus, the Life of the World,
Who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

Other References

MORAL CRITERIA FOR THE FAMILY OF TODAY

William E. May

Introduction

Families, and particularly children, are gravely at risk today. This was frankly acknowledged in the Report, entitled *Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families*, issued in the summer of 1991 by a National Commission on Children established in 1987 by the Congress and President of the United States. The Commission's Report is grim. The following heartrending findings of the Commission will help us appreciate the magnitude of the difficulties confronting us and the need for "moral criteria for the family of today" :

1. Today, one in four children in the United States is raised by just one parent, usually a divorced or unmarried mother. Many grow up without the consistent presence of a father in their lives....

2. Illicit drugs and the wanton violence they spawn have ravaged U.S. communities, large and small..with devastating consequences for children of all ages....Many are abandoned at birth by parents who are too impaired to want them or care for them....

3. [A] child need not be economically poor to be impoverished in America today. A poverty of spirit touches every child, at whatever income level, who does not receive the time, attention, and guidance he or she needs and wants from parents and other caring adults.

The Commission likewise noted the social problems caused by the alarming decline in the proportion of children to the general population.

This decline is attributable to a dramatic fall in the birthrate, caused by the widespread practice in the United States of contraception and, a matter on which the Commission's Report is silent, of abortion. For the past decade, in fact, more than a million and half unborn children have been aborted each year in the United States; and in some American cities, including the nation's capital, more babies are aborted annually than are born. These sobering statistics give us a glimpse of the difficulties facing families in the United States today. Although the portrait drawn may not be replicated precisely in other countries, there is no doubt that contraception, abortion, and divorce, with their impact on children and families, characterize the affluent nations of the West and are being vigorously promoted elsewhere. There is an urgent need for what Pope John Paul II calls "the civilization of love" to take root in the hearts of contemporary men and women and for families *to be what they are: communities of loving service to life and society*.

Marriage: The Rock Upon Which the Family Is Built

The first and most basic moral criterion (1) for the family of today—and of *every* day and age—is this: *the family must be rooted in the marriage of one man and one woman*. Although the reasons for this should be obvious, this basic truth, unfortunately, seems difficult for many of our contemporaries to understand. Thus I will now try to show why this is such a basic normative truth by reflecting on the relationship between marriage and the generation of human life and by articulating other basic moral criteria for the family of today.

Marriage and the Generation of Human Life

If the human race is to continue, new human beings—new persons—must come into existence. Although it is possible today to "make" human babies in the laboratory, we all know that human babies come into existence through the genital union of a man and a woman and that this is surely the usual way that new human beings come to be.

A human being, no matter how he or she comes to be, is something precious and good, a person, a being of incalculable value, worthy of respect, a bearer of inviolable rights, a being who *ought to be loved*. But it is *not* good for new human life to come into existence through the random copulation of nonmarried males and females. This is not good, precisely because nonmarried males and females have failed to *capacitate* themselves, through their own free choices, to receive this life lovingly, to nourish it humanely, and to educate it in the love and service of God and man.

Practically all civilized societies, until very recently, rightly regarded it irresponsible for unattached men and women to generate human life through their acts of fornication, and it is a sign of a new barbarism, completely opposed to the "civilization of love," that many today now assert the "right" of "live-in lovers" and of single men and women to have children, whether the fruit of their coupling or the "product" of new "reproductive" technologies.

Nonmarried individuals do not have the *right* to generate human life precisely because they are not married. They refuse to give themselves unconditionally to one another and to respect the "goods" or "blessings" of marriage,

among which are children and faithful conjugal love. But married men and women, precisely because they have given themselves to one another in marriage, have made themselves *fit* to generate human life. By freely choosing to give themselves unreservedly to one another they have given themselves the identity of husbands and wives who *can*, together, welcome a child lovingly and give it the home it needs if it is to take root and grow. Because they have committed themselves to one another and to the “goods” or “blessings” of marriage, they have capacitated themselves to nourish the child to whom they can give life humanely and to educate it in the love and service of God and man.

Here an analogy may be helpful. I do not have the right to diagnose sick people and prescribe medicines for them. I do not have this right because I have not freely chosen to study medicine and discipline myself so that I can acquire the knowledge and skills needed to do these tasks. But doctors, who have freely chosen to submit themselves to the discipline of studying medicine and of developing the skills necessary to practice it, do have this right. They have freely chosen to make themselves *fit* to do what doctors are supposed to do. Similarly, married men and women have, by freely choosing to marry, made themselves *fit* to do what husbands and wives are supposed to do; and among the things that husbands and wives are supposed to do is to give life to new human beings and to provide them with the home they need. Thus a second (2) moral criterion for the family today is this: *children, who are persons equal in dignity to their mothers and fathers, are to be begotten in the loving embrace of husband and wife.*

Marriage: A Person-Affirming, Love-Enabling, Life-Giving, and Sanctifying Reality

1. Marriage: A Person-Affirming Reality

Marriage comes into existence when a man and a woman, forswearing all others, through an “act of irrevocable personal consent” freely give themselves to one another. At the heart of the act establishing marriage is a free, self-determining choice on the part of the man and the woman, through which they give themselves a new and lasting identity. This man becomes this woman’s *husband*, and she becomes his *wife*, and together they become *spouses*. Prior to this act of irrevocable personal consent the man and the woman are separate individuals, replaceable and substitutable in each other’s lives. But in and through this act they make each other unique and irreplaceable. The man and the woman are not, for each other, *replaceable and substitutable individuals* but are rather *irreplaceable and non-substitutable persons*. Thus marriage, far from being a legalistic or extrinsic limitation on the freedom of men and women or an empty formality is indeed, “an interior requirement of the covenant of conjugal love which is publicly affirmed as unique and exclusive.”

2. Marriage: A Love-Enabling Reality

Marriage is “the intimate community of life and of conjugal love.” The institution of marriage *protects and defends* conjugal love, which is the *life-giving* or animating principle of marriage. *Conjugal love constitutes the personal reality that the institution of marriage confirms, protects, and sanctions before God and man.* The first act of conjugal love is the act of irrevocable personal consent whereby a man and woman, by freely giving themselves to one another as husband and wife, establish their marriage, a *person-affirming reality*.

This person-affirming reality enables husbands and wives to *give* to each other the love that is unique and proper to them, *conjugal love*, because only spouses can give love of this kind and what makes a man and a woman *to be spouses* is their marriage. Even if this love should, tragically, be actually withdrawn as the spouses' life together unfolds, it remains as the *life-giving principle* and *intrinsic requirement* of marriage. Husbands and wives are under an obligation to *give* this love to each other because they have freely committed themselves to give it; moreover, they *can* give this love because their marriage enables them to do so. Thus a third (3) basic moral criterion for families, which are rooted in the reality of marriage, is this: *husbands and wives must give to each other the gift of conjugal love and deepen it throughout their lives*. By freely consenting to give themselves to one another in marriage, they have established each other as non-substitutable and irreplaceable persons and have, by doing so, capacitated themselves to give one another *conjugal love*. This love, "ratified by mutual faith," must be "indissolubly faithful amidst the prosperities and adversities of both body and soul." Only if they subsequently do what they are now capable of doing will a "civilization of love" be possible.

3. Marriage: A Life-Giving Reality

This point has already, to some extent, been considered in reflecting on marriage and the generation of human life. Here I will consider this matter from a somewhat different perspective by relating it to conjugal love. Any love between two persons is impossible unless there is some common good that binds them together; and man's capacity for love depends on his willingness to seek a good together with others and to subordinate himself to that good for the sake of others or to others for the sake of that good.

This principle is true of every form of human love and is central to a "civilization of love." But in marriage this principle is revealed in a special and unique way. For in marriage, and in marriage alone, two people, a man and a woman, are united in such a way that they become in a sense "one flesh," i.e., the common subject, as it were, of a sexual life. To ensure that one of them does not become for the other nothing more than an object of use, a means to the attainment of some selfish end, they must share the same end or common good. "Such an end, where marriage is concerned"—so Pope John Paul II, writing as the philosopher Karol Wojtyła, has said—"is the procreation and education of children, the future generation, a family, and, at the same time, the continual ripening of the relationship between two people, in all the areas of activity which conjugal life includes. These objective purposes of marriage create in principle the possibility of love and exclude the possibility of treating a person as a means to an end and as an object for use."

In other words, in getting married a man and a woman not only give to themselves the irrevocable identity of husband and wife but also pledge to one another that they will honor and foster the "goods" or "blessings" of marriage, namely, the procreation and education of children and steadfast faithful love.

The reality of these "goods" is beautifully revealed in the marital or conjugal act, for which marriage also capacitates the spouses. The conjugal act is indeed a very specific and special kind of act.

It is, first of all, an act that manifests uniquely and fittingly the sexual complementarity of husband and wife as male and female.

I believe that we can rightly regard human sexuality as a giving and a receiving. It is a giving and a receiving for both males and females. However, males and females express their sexuality—their giving and receiving—in complementary ways: the male gives in a receiving sort of way, while the female receives in a giving sort of way. It is not that the male is active and the female passive.

There is activity on the part of both, but the man, precisely because of the kind of sexual being that he is, gives in a receiving sort of way while the female, precisely because she is the kind of sexual being she is, receives in a giving sort of way. Their sexuality is, as we shall see more fully in Chapter Two, complementary in this way: male sexuality is an emphasis on giving in a receiving sort of way, whereas female sexuality is an emphasis on receiving in a giving sort of way.

This is illustrated in a striking way in the marital or conjugal act. In this act the husband gives himself to his wife by entering into her body, her person, and in doing so he receives her into himself, while she, in receiving him bodily into herself, gives to him the gift of herself.

To understand the significance of the conjugal or marital act it is, secondly, most important to recognize that the marital act is not simply a genital act between a man and a woman who “happen” to be married. It is, rather, an act participating in the marriage itself and one made possible only because of the marriage: marriage, in short, enables husband and wife to engage in the marital act. I hope now to show why this is true.

Nonmarried men and women are capable of engaging in *genital* acts because they are endowed with genitals. But when nonmarried men and women have sex, they do not, and *cannot, give* themselves to each other and *receive* each other. The man cannot give himself to the woman in a receiving sort of way, nor can she receive him in a giving sort of way. They cannot do so precisely because they are *not* married. They have refused to make each other irreplaceable and nonsubstitutable persons; they have refused to make each other *spouses*. Their sexual act, therefore, does *not* unite two irreplaceable and nonsubstitutable persons; it merely joins two individuals who remain *in principle* replaceable, substitutable, disposable. There can be, between them, no true giving in a receiving sort of way or receiving in a giving sort of way. Their sexual act is, in fact, a lie.

But husbands and wives, who have freely chosen to give themselves the identity of irreplaceable and nonsubstitutable spouses, are capable of the conjugal or spousal act—of giving in a receiving sort of way and receiving in a giving sort of way. And they are capable of doing so precisely because of their marriage. Thus the conjugal act, precisely as *conjugal*, is an act that participates in their marriage, which, as we have seen, comes into existence when the man gives himself unreservedly to the woman in a receiving sort of way and when she in turn unreservedly receives him in a giving sort of way. The marital act is, therefore, one that respects the “goods” or “blessings” of marriage, i.e., the goods of children and of steadfast faithful love. As marital, therefore, it is an act (1) open to the communication of conjugal love and (2) open to the gift of new human life.

Thus a genital act forced upon a wife by a drunken husband seeking only to gratify his sexual desires and unconcerned about her condition and legitimate desires cannot be regarded as a true marital act. Every reasonable person can recognize that this contrary to moral order. This brings us to a fourth (4) moral criterion for families: *spouses ought not, either in anticipation of their marital union, while engaging in it, or during the development of its natural consequences, propose, either as end or means, to impede procreation.* If they choose to do this, they are setting their hearts, their wills, against the good of human life in its transmission. Their choice is anti-life. Moreover, because marriage is a life-giving reality, their choice is opposed to the meaning of marriage and of the marital act.

Since the life of a human person must be respected from its beginning, a fifth (5) moral criterion for families immediately ensues, namely, that *it is always gravely wrong freely to choose to abort unborn babies.*

Husbands and wives are to be *responsible* parents, and there can be no true contradiction between their obligation to respect the procreative good of marriage and the fostering of conjugal love. There may be serious reasons for a married couple to limit the number of their children and perhaps to refrain from having any. But in exercising their responsibilities in this matter they ought not freely choose to set their hearts against the good of human life in its transmission; rather, they should freely choose to respect the fertile cycles of the wife. Thus a sixth moral criterion (6) for the family today is this: *husbands and wives must learn to foster conjugal love by respecting the wife's fertility and by abstaining from the marital act when there is good reason to do so.* Loving husbands and wives are connaturally disposed to honor these criteria and find their violation repugnant.

They do so because these criteria naturally flow from the meaning of marriage as a *life-giving reality* rooted in conjugal love, a love open to good of human life.

Marriage and Family as Serving Life and the Human Community

1. Parents' Obligations Toward Their Children

Husbands and wives are called not only to receive life lovingly, but to nourish it humanely and to educate it in the love and service of God, and their marriage *capacitates* them for these tasks too. This is a seventh (7) moral criterion of the family: parents have the duty, and the right, to educate their own children. This duty and the right corresponding to it flow from the very nature of fatherly and motherly love, a love that is fulfilled "in the task of education as it completes and perfects its service to life."

The duty of parents to educate their children encompasses the following elements. First of all, parents (a) need to help their children acquire a sense of values, in particular a correct attitude toward material goods, which are intended to serve *persons*, who must always be considered as more precious for what they *are* than for what they *have*. Second (b) they must help their children learn that they must cultivate virtues if they are to be truly the persons they are meant to be, and particularly today, in a world that is hostile to the "civilization of love," the virtues of justice and love. Finally (c), they need to educate their children in the area of human sexuality, leading them to appreciate the beauty of their sexuality and the human significance of and need for the virtue of chastity, a virtue that enables them to come into possession of their sexual desires and urges and not to be possessed by them, a virtue that *capacitates* them to *give themselves away in love to others.*

The work of parents in educating their own children is indispensable. "It is not an exaggeration," Pope John Paul II has said, "to reaffirm that the life of nations, of states, and of international organizations 'passes' through the family....[Indeed] *through the family passes the primary current of the civilization of love*, which finds therein its 'social foundations'"

Parents share their educational mission with other individuals or institutions, such as the Church and the State. But it is imperative that the mission of education respect the *principle of subsidiarity*. This implies the legitimacy and indeed the need of giving help to parents, but it is limited by their right as the *primary educators* of their children. Indeed "all other participants in the process of education are only able to carry out their responsibilities *in the name of the parents, with their consent* and, to a certain degree, *with their authorization*." Thus an eighth (8) criterion for the family today is this: *Church and State must both honor the primary right of parents as educators of their children and cooperate with them in this educative task.*

Children learn from the example given to them perhaps even more than from what is said to them. Thus, in connection with the right and duty of parents to educate their children, it seems to me that the following is sound advice: one of the best gifts that a husband can give his wife is to love her children and, vice versa, one of the best gifts a wife can give her husband is to love his children. And one of the best gifts a father can give his children is to love their mother, and vice versa.

2. The Family's Service to Society

By nature and vocation the family rooted in the marriage of one man and women is open to other families and to society.

The obligation of the family is to serve society and the wider human community is, indeed, not something added on to or extrinsic to the family, but is rooted in its *being*.

"The family has a vital and organic links in the society, since it is the foundation and nourishes it continually through its service to life: it is from the family that citizens come to birth and it is within the family that they find the first school of the virtues that are animating principle of the existence and development of society itself."

The "first and fundamental contribution" of the family to society is "the very experience of communion and sharing that should characterize the family's daily life." By becoming what it is meant to be, the family is the first and most efficacious school of sociality, through the spontaneous gratuity of the relationships among its members, which takes place through their cordial welcoming of each other, their disinterested availability, their generous service, their deep solidarity.

The family contributes to the good of society by works of social service, especially by means of hospitality, by opening "the door of one's home and still more of one's heart to the pleas of one's brothers and sisters."

A ninth (9) criterion of the family today, therefore, is the following: *the family must serve society by works of social service, in particular, by hospitality to others.*

Precisely because the family is the first school in the "civilization of love" and contributes so efficaciously to the well-being of society,

there is a corresponding obligation on the part of society and the state to recognize and respect the role of the family in the development of society. Thus a tenth (10) criterion of the family of today is this: *society and the state must serve the family: they must make it possible for it to obtain the helps of which it has need and recognize the rights of the family in a formal way.*

Since, unfortunately, the rights of the family are today threatened and ignored by many states and societies, families themselves “must be the first to take steps to see that laws and institutions of the state not only do not offend but support and positively defend the rights and duties of families.” Families must become protagonists of “family politics” and assume “responsibility for transforming society.” This gives us an eleventh (11) criterion for the family of today: *families must defend their rights and duties.*

In connection with this matter, there is great need today to respect the rights of women and, in particular, of mothers. There is, of course, “no doubt that the equal dignity and responsibility of men and women fully justifies women’s access to public functions.” Nonetheless, while it must be recognized that women have the same right as men to perform various public functions, society must be structured in such a way that wives and mothers are *not in practice compelled* to work outside the home, and that their families can live and prosper in a dignified way even when they themselves devote their full time to their own family....the mentality which honors women more for their work outside the home than for their work within the family must be overcome. This requires that men should truly esteem and love women with total respect for their personal dignity, and that society should create and develop conditions favoring work in the home.

A twelfth (12) criterion for the family today, therefore, can be put as follows: *Society must respect the contribution made by mothers who choose to remain at home and care for their children and secure its just compensation.*

3. Marriage, a Sanctifying Reality

The Church has always taught that God is the author of marriage. The creation accounts in the first chapters of Genesis are narratives not only of the creation of the universe, not only the creation of Man, male and female, but also of the creation of *marriage*. God is the author, the creator, both of human nature and the nature of marriage. But God is also the one who has willed to enter into a covenant of love with human persons; he is the source of sanctifying grace, which enables us to share his divine nature, just as his only begotten Son, in becoming man, shares our human nature. Nature is for grace; creation is for covenant.

God has willed our human nature to be the *kind* of nature that it is—the nature of persons endowed with intelligence and free choice—precisely so that we would be free to accept his offer of grace and to enter into an everlasting covenant with him. He cannot give his own life to nonrational creatures like dogs or cats or chimpanzees simply because these creatures of his are not inwardly open to receive this surpassing gift. Nor could he become incarnate in creatures of this kind. But he *can* give us his very own life because he has made us to be the kind of beings capable of receiving it. And he *can*—and *has*—become incarnate in human flesh in the person of his only begotten Son, precisely in order to redeem us from sin and enable us to become fully the beings he wills us to be: his own children, his sons and daughters, members of his own divine family.

Similarly, God has given the human reality of marriage the *nature* it has because he wills to integrate it into his divine plan and to make it a means of holiness, of sanctification. And he has so integrated it into his loving and wise plan of human redemption in the life, death, and resurrection of his Son, who raised the marriages of Christians to the dignity of a sacrament of the new and everlasting covenant.

Recall that the prophets of the Old Testament (Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel) fittingly used the human reality of marriage as a symbol of the loving union or covenant between God and his chosen people. His Son Jesus is the supreme prophet, the One who fully reveals to us the mystery of God's love for humankind, the One who brings into being the new and eternal covenant of God's love for us. And in the New Testament Jesus is portrayed as the Bridegroom par excellence, the One who gives his life for his spotless bride the Church. Moreover, in the New Testament we read that the human reality of marriage symbolizes the bridal union of Christ and his Church: this is the "great mystery" to which marriage points (cf. Eph. 5:23 ff).

In addition, the marriage of Christians, of those who "marry in the Lord," not only points to or symbolizes the life-giving, love-giving, grace-giving and sanctifying union of Christ and the Church, but it also inwardly participates in this bridal union and makes it efficaciously present in the world. Christians have already, by baptism, become "new" creatures in Christ: they have become, through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, members of the divine family, children of his Father, led by his Spirit. As a result, when Christians unite sexually with others they do so not as isolated individuals but as members of Christ's living body the Church.

Should they do so outside of marriage, they not only act immorally but desecrate the body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 6:15-17). But when they give themselves to each other in marriage, which is to be honored in every way (cf. Heb 13:4), they marry "in the Lord." Precisely because Christian husbands and wives are already, through baptism, "new" creatures, members of the household of God, their marital union inwardly participates in the grace-giving, sanctifying, redemptive union of Christ and his Church. Their marriage is a sacrament of sanctifying grace.

Thus the marriage of Christians is a sanctifying reality. It enables Christian husbands and wives to love one another with a redemptive, sanctifying love, for their human conjugal love has been graced by Christ himself and merges the divine with the human.

In forming a communion of persons, Christian husbands and wives indeed bring into existence the "domestic church," the "church in miniature." The Christian family, therefore, has a specific and original role to play within the larger Church. Its mission is to participate in a unique way in the redemptive work of Christ. Its task, as Pope John Paul II has so well expressed it, is to be fully what it is, i.e., a believing and evangelizing community, a community in dialogue with God, a community serving others by transforming the world through Christ's redemptive love. It is a community that participates in the prophetic, priestly, and kingly mission of Christ.

Marriage, by the will of God, has been made a sacrament of sanctifying grace, capable of helping Christian husbands and wives answer God's call to be holy, enabling them to participate in a unique and indispensable way in the redemptive work of Christ.

Thus a thirteenth (13) criterion for the Christian family today is this: *The Christian family must carry out its mission as the domestic Church and participate in Christ's redemptive work.*

Conclusion: The Family and Society ; The Christian Family

1.The Family and Society

My fundamental argument has been that the human race survives only in its children; and its children can flourish fully only in the family rooted in the marriage of one man and woman. Only if this truth is recognized can a "civilization of love" be developed.

But today this understanding of the family is under attack. According to the champions of "free sex," of utilitarianism and individualism, of militant feminism and the "gay" revolution, a family is essentially a matter of choice. According to those advocating these ideas the "family" should be redefined so as to emphasize bonds formed, not so much by marriage and kinship as by personal choices and declared commitment. In other words, "family" ought to be defined primarily in terms of the free choices made by the individuals who form them—and who are free to leave them whenever they are so disposed.

This is folly. As we have seen, the future of the human race passes through the family rooted in the marriage of one man and one woman. Children *need* both a mother and a father. Mothering does not present the difficulties that fathering does. As one writer notes, "simply stated, an adult female will be naturally transformed into a social mother when she bears a child, but there is no corresponding natural transformation for a male." The father-involved family, as another author points out, "is a fragile cultural achievement that cannot be taken for granted."

The essence of the matter can be put this way: In order for a male to be induced to undertake the responsibility of fathering, he needs, first of all, to give himself unreservedly to a particular woman, who in turn must receive him and, in receiving him, give herself to him.

Both the man and the woman, if the father's role is to be properly fulfilled, must give themselves to each other unreservedly. They must, in other words, take upon themselves the responsibility of marriage, of fidelity to each other, of selfless service to their children, of building a "civilization of love." Consequently, as John W. Miller has so eloquently put it, when a culture ceases to support, through its mores, symbols, models, laws, and rituals, the sanctity of the sexual bond between a man and his wife and a father's involvement with his own children, powerful natural forces will inevitably take over in favor of the mother-alone family; the fragility of the sexual bond (and the investment of fathers with children) will give way to the strength of the primary bond between mother and child.

This enables us to formulate a thirteenth (13) criterion for families today: *society must support the sanctity of the marriage bond if men are to be fathers to their children.*

2. The Christian Family

The Christian family, rooted in the sacramental marriage of one man and one woman, is a "domestic church." It thus shares in the saving, redemptive mission of the Church with an original and characteristic task, linked to its very nature. It participates in the triple mission of Christ as prophet, priest, and king, and it does so under the threefold aspect of being a believing and evangelizing community, a community in dialogue with God, and a community at the service of mankind.

It exercises its mission through the daily realities of married and family life, sanctifying itself and the world in which it lives. I can summarize it by formulating a fourteenth (14) criterion, one incumbent upon Christian families: *The Christian family must become in truth a "domestic Church," mediating the redemptive love of Christ to the world of today.*

I can end this paper as follows. A slogan voiced by champions of "free love," utilitarianism and individualism is that "no unwanted child ought ever to be born." This is banal. Opposed to it is a truth rooted in the reality of human existence, namely, that "no person, including children, ought to be unwanted." The only way to develop a society in which all human persons, including unborn children, are indeed loved and wanted is to respect the beauty of a family rooted in the marriage of one man and one woman. Only by doing so can the "civilization of love" become a reality.

Christian witness can be the best response to atheist polemics.

BY STEPHEN J. POPE / MAY 5, 2008 AMERICA

Who are the "new atheist"? Broadly speaking, they are a collection of writers who have come together in recent years in their disdain for the very idea of God. They regard religion as the last bastion of superstition, obscurantism and fear and see the Christian churches as dedicated to inhibiting progress and human freedom. They regard biological evolution as providing the best overall account of who we are, where we have come from and where we might go as a species.

Religion "poisons everything," proclaims the journalist Christopher Hitchens, and religious morality amounts to psychological abuse. The sociobiologist Richard Dawkins describes religion as a "virus," and in *The God Delusion* proclaims that monotheism is "the great unmentionable evil at the center of our culture." Dawkins regards theistic ethics as commanding obedience to a biblical God whose jealous and violent character is anything but morally admirable. The philosopher Daniel Dennett depicts religion as a willful attempt to pass on ignorance through promises that can never be kept. He asserts that religious morality based on sacred texts immunizes people from asking critical questions. And in *The End of Faith*, Sam Harris argues that faith only generates "solidarity born of tribal and tribalizing fictions." Its promotion of irrationality dangerously sanctions a habit of acting out of religious conviction unrestrained by humility or compassion.

One can certainly raise questions about the accusations of the new atheism, but practical constraints narrow my focus to three issues: first, the relation between belief in God and morality; second, the relation between morality, reason and religion; and third, the relation between morality and the Christian ethic of love. The new atheist critique of Christian morality usually applies (if at all) only to a fundamentalist minority of Christians. Yet because this literature hits home with many readers, we Christians have to take seriously both its criticisms and our responsibility to present a better public witness to the truth of the Gospel.

Is God Necessary for Morality?

Much of the new atheist literature is reactive in that it begins by sharply criticizing what it rejects. The new atheists react against a triple claim often advanced by religious people that belief in a personal God is necessary for people to have moral knowledge, for people to do what is right and avoid wrong, and for people to justify moral absolutes.

First, some Christians claim that belief in a God who reveals the divine law presents the sole (or most reliable) basis for knowing right from wrong. Reason takes people all over the place, but only religious authority can settle things once and for all. Yet the value of a given moral authority does not prove either its legitimacy or reliability. Such an approach to moral security is made the more troublesome by the fact that Christians who rely on the same scriptural authority, as well as Catholic Christians who profess loyalty to a single hierarchy, often disagree on moral issues.

Belief in God does not exempt one from the difficult work of interpreting the significance of specific biblical texts or church teachings for our own day. On the contrary, it can make moral reasoning at least as complex as anything one finds in texts of moral philosophy.

The Catholic tradition walks a middle way between the religious positivist, who says we ought to rely only on religious authority, and the new atheist, who claims reason to be self-sufficient. Catholics affirm the need for community and the value of the accumulated wisdom of the past; Catholics also hold that each person is created with a conscience and has access to the natural law through the exercise of his or her moral intelligence. God teaches us through the exercise of our reason within the church and the broader social world within which we act.

Second, some Christians assert that belief in God supplies a necessary motive for doing right and avoiding wrong. The so-called sanction argument holds that fear of divine wrath keeps people on the narrow path; without it, people are capable of anything. The new atheists properly target those who take this deeply pessimistic view of the human person, curbed from evil only by threat of eternal punishment. As Harris puts it, our “common humanity is reason enough to protect our fellow human beings from coming to harm.”

On this point, catholic moral anthropology is closer to the new atheists than to Christian fear-mongers. It regards each person’s conscience as capable of being moved by an innate “connaturality” with the good. God does not inspire in us a servile fear, which, as David Hume noted long ago, is an essentially egocentric position. Rather,

Christian life calls us toward authentic love of God, neighbor and self teaches us that we ought to fear sin and love God as our savior and redeemer.

Third, the new atheists reject the claim that only belief in God provides the basis for exceptionless moral prohibitions. Harris regards moral absolutism as proposing a “certainty without evidence” that “is necessarily divisive and dehumanizing.” Even Christian critics see the question-begging nature of an apologetic tack that takes for granted the legitimacy of moral absolutes. It also ignores the fact some atheists display a very strong moral code, justified by reasons independent of belief in God. The new atheists recognize the wrongfulness of murder, rape and the like. Yet one might argue that this thin concession does not provide a sufficiently detailed ethic regarding morally complex and contentious cases, especially concerning the most vulnerable among us. Moral absolutes against abortion, embryonic stem cell research and physician-assisted suicide can be maintained, Christians might argue, only by reliance on divinely mandated or church-endorsed morality.

Yet the fact that Christians themselves are sharply divided over the ethics of life indicates that belief in God does not necessarily guarantee consensus over the content of particular moral absolutes. The significant gap between the small minority of Christians who accept the absolute prohibition on artificial contraception and the vast majority who differentiate between its proper and improper uses illustrates this point. The Catholic natural law tradition does not teach that we come to know the strictly binding character of these norms only through divine revelation or ecclesial instruction. It affirms that one can attain knowledge of moral norms through the use of human moral intelligence.

Is Christians Ethics Irrational?

A major issue raised by the new atheists concerns the relation between Christian morality and reason. The new atheists want us to reject Christianity for the sake of moral progress, then to draw an antinomy between two massive domains of human agency – reason and religion – in order to promote the dominance of the former and the destruction of the latter. At times they concede that the Christian tradition has made some important historical contributions to human well-being (including universities and hospitals), but they argue that everything good in the Christian tradition is because of the operation of reason within it. Conversely, everything bad in the tradition is because of religion, not reason. This line of argumentation is arbitrary, tendentious and viciously circular. It ignores the fact that the global (and ill-defined) categories of “reason” and “religion” are not alternatives but rather two forms of human activity that can be related variously: competitively, cooperatively or in other ways. From a Christian standpoint, the cause of evil can be attributed neither to religion nor reason, but to human sin – the willful decision to put what is essentially good to evil uses out of greed, pride or other twisted motivations.

There is no question that sometimes evil-doing has been pursued under the guise of religion, but the same can be said of science. The new atheists display their innocence of the complexity of historical causation when they simply point to “religion” as the prime cause of the wrongdoing of Christians, ranging from Augustine’s defense of using violence to repress heretics to the “silence” of Pius XII during the Holocaust. One could just as easily (and cheaply) blame reason for similar horrors.

If the Nazis had not been so intelligently organized, they could not have managed their factories of death so efficiently. I say this facetiously, but the writings of the new atheists are replete with such simpleminded rhetoric from self-appointed champions of reason. Is the Christian Ethic of Love Unrealistic?

Some of the new atheists, informed by sociobiology and evolutionary psychology, hold that Christian morality proposes an impossibly high norm of love; meanwhile, the actual conduct of Christians tends to conform to neo-Darwinian expectations that we care for “our own” and not others. In their view, what we need is a more realistic ethic, less lofty but more effective.

Dawkins regards morality as a set of normative standards that rewards good acts with social approval and punishes bad acts with social disapproval, and within which an individual promotes his or her evolutionary self-interest through morality. Altruism typically takes one of four forms: “kin altruism” toward relatives and especially our own children; “reciprocal altruism,” which trades benefits with friends in mutually beneficial relationships; generous acts, which accrue “reputational benefits”; and acts of assistance, which enhance an individual’s own social status. In every society morality promotes individual conformity to socially agreed-upon patterns of reciprocity that allow communities to function with some degree of order, regularity and peace. Christian morality does the same.

The new atheists regard Christian love as a completely unrealistic form of altruism. Despite high-flown sentiments, most Christians channel their resources to their own loved ones rather than to the poor.

A small degree of altruism can be taught by culture, but instructing human beings to be altruistic is, to use Dawkins’s metaphor, like training a bear to ride a unicycle. Altruism toward a stranger is an “evolutionary mistake,”

and those who regularly practice indiscriminate altruism can expect to be evolutionary failures as well as impoverished.

Advocates of Christian morality can respond to this position in several ways.

First, it is important to admit that the actual conduct of Christians often leaves a great deal to be desired. In-group favoritism and out-group oppression, sometimes against one another’s subgroups and more often against outsiders, can do more damage to the Christian community than any new atheist tract ever could. The new atheists echo Freud’s denunciation of the contradiction between the universal ethic of the Gospel and the history of Christian brutality toward the Jews.

Second, the new atheists’ moral critique replicates the Christian tradition’s own internal criticisms of religious hypocrisy, apathy and self-deception. The prophetic tradition, for example, launched its sharpest criticisms against those who practiced liturgical correctness while being indifferent to the suffering of the poor. And it is clear that we have yet to grasp fully the implications of Jesus’ mission to save sinners, not the righteous. Christian prophets have recognized, as Dorothy Day once observed, that the Christian must live in a state of “permanent dissatisfaction with the church.”

Third, the critique applies to sectarian Christians who suggest that the Christian ethic constitutes a completely radical way of life that transcends all normal human needs and limitations and to those who interpret discipleship as an ethic for saints and heroes, but not for ordinary people. Yet Catholic ethics regards grace as the perfection of human nature, not its enemy. The church acknowledges that divine grace enables people like Oscar Romero to lead heroically self-giving lives. The church also understands that grace calls most of us to follow the Gospel in everyday life as we take care of our families, friends and neighbors. Even the most demanding Christian ideals, such as the preferential option for the poor, are sustained when they are pursued within life-giving personal relationships and communities.

Learning From the New Atheists

The anti-religious polemics offered by the new atheists are often unfair, uninformed and hysterical. Yet their body of work offers us a salutary reminder of the importance of two dimensions of moral integrity: the intellectual and the practical. Christian ethics is based on the belief that the purpose of human existence is neither the “replication of genes” nor the “survival of the fittest,” but the development of our capacity to understand and to love.

The new atheists rightly complain about the unreflective and ill-informed nature of much Christian belief. Harris laments, for example, the pervasive superficiality and anti-intellectualism of popular Christianity; Dawkins criticizes the “distressingly little curiosity” that religious people show regarding their own faith. It is no consolation that secular people in our society display similar weaknesses.

While the attacks of the new atheists reveal their ignorance of the Christian faith, their call for greater intellectual honesty within the Christian community is appropriate and ought to be heeded.

The new atheists also consistently point to a gap between Christian beliefs and Christian conduct. But if the flawed conduct adds fuel to the new atheists’ fire, does not the highest Christian witness snuff out at least some of the flames? Beliefs begin to make sense only when they are embodied in real lives. True Christians exemplify the love of God and neighbor in everyday life in work, family and community life; and the examples of Christians who selflessly serve the poor and neglected are worth more than 1,000 books on moral theology.

For most of us, belief or unbelief has little to do with proofs for God’s existence or the intellectual cogency of Trinitarian theology. Most people are attracted (or repelled) by the quality of the lives of the individual Christians they encounter, rather than by the intellectual appeal of Christian beliefs. The primary response of Christians to the new atheism, then should not be to marshal better moral counterarguments, but to engage in concrete actions that show that Christian beliefs are not sentimental illusions. As the author of 1 John put it, “let us love not with word or with tongue but in deed and in truth” (3:18)

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MORAL RELATIVISM is the position that moral propositions do not reflect absolute or universal truths. It not only holds that ethical judgments emerge from social customs and personal preferences, but also that there is no **single** standard by which to assess an ethical proposition's truth. Many **relativists** see moral values as applicable only within certain cultural boundaries. Some would even suggest that one person's ethical judgments or acts cannot be judged by another, though most relativists profound a more limited version of the theory.

Some moral relativists- for example, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980)- hold that a personal and subjective moral core lies at the foundation of our moral acts. They believe that public morality is a reflection of social convention, and that only personal, subjective morality is truly authentic.

Moral Nihilist propound a view that bears some similarity to relativism. The most famous nihilist, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), believed that morality is impossible without God, and as he argued there is no God, there is **ipso facto** no morality.

Moral relativism is not the same as moral pluralism, which acknowledges the co-existence of opposing ideas and practices, but does not suggest that they are equally valid. Moral relativism, in contrast, contends that opposing moral positions have no truth value, and that there is no preferred standard of reference by which to judge them.

Moral relativism is not new. Protagoras' (circa 481-420 BC) assertion that "man is the measure of all things" is an early philosophical precursor to modern relativism.

The Greek historian Herodotus (circa 484-420BC) observed that each society thinks its own belief system and way of doing things are best. Various ancient philosophers also questioned the idea of an absolute standard of morality.

The 18th century Enlightenment philosopher, David Hume (1711-1776), is in several important respects the father of both modern emotivism and moral relativism. He distinguished between matters of fact and matters of value, and suggested that moral judgments consist of the latter, for they do not deal with verifiable facts that obtain in the world, but only with our sentiments and passions. Moreover, he, too, observed that there are differences in moral standards among individuals and societies. He is famous for denying any objective standard for morality, and suggested that the universe is indifferent to our preferences and our troubles.

In the modern era, anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict (1887-1948), cautioned observers to not use their own cultural standards to evaluate those they were studying, which is known as ethnocentrism. Benedict said there are no morals, only customs, and in comparing customs, the anthropologist, "Inso far as he remains an anthropologist, he is bound to avoid any weighting of one in favor of the other". To some extent, the increasing body of knowledge of great differences in belief among societies caused both social scientists and philosophers to question whether there can be any objective, absolute standards pertaining to values. This caused some to posit that differing systems have equal validity, with no standard adjudicating among conflicting beliefs. The Finnish philosopher-anthropologist, Edward Westermarck (1862-1939) was among the first to formulate a detailed theory of moral relativism.

He contended that all moral ideas are subjective judgments that reflect one's upbringing. He rejected G.E. Moore's (1873-1958) intuitionism, invogue during the early part of the 20th century ,due to the obvious differences in beliefs among societies , which he said was evidence that there is no innate, intuitive power.

Some philosophical considerations

So-called descriptive or normative relativists (for example, "Ralph Barton Perry"), accept the fact that there are fundamental disagreements about the moral course of action even when the same non-moral facts obtain and the same consequences from an action will occur. However, the descriptive relativist does not necessarily deny that there is one, correct moral appraisal, given the same set of circumstances. Other descriptivists believe that opposing moral beliefs can both be true, though critics point out that this leads to obvious logical problems. The latter descriptivists, for example, several leading Existentialists, believe that morality is entirely subjective and personal and beyond the judgment of others. In this view, moral judgments are more akin to aesthetic considerations and are not amenable to rational analysis.

In contrast, the metaethical relativist maintains that *all* moral judgments are based on either societal or individual standards, and that there is no single, objective standard by which one can assess the truth of a moral proposition. While he preferred to deal with more practical, real-life ethical matters, the British philosopher Bernard Williams (1929-2003)reluctantly came to this conclusion when he put on his metaethicist's hat.

Metaethical relativists, in General, believe that the descriptive properties of terms such as good, bad, right, and wrong are not subject to universal truth conditions, but only to societal convention and personal preference.

Given the same set of verifiable facts , some societies or individuals will have a fundamental disagreement about what *ought* to be done based on societal or individual norms, and these cannot be adjudicated using some independent standard of evaluation, for the latter standard will always be societal or personal and not universal, unlike, for example, the scientific standards for assessing temperature or for determining mathematical truths.

Moral relativism stands in marked contrast to moral absolutism, moral realism, and moral naturalism, which all maintain that there are objective moral facts, facts that can be both known and judged, whether , through some process of verification or through intuition. These philosophies see morality as something that obtains in the world. Examples include the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) who saw man's nature inherently good, or of Ayn Rand, who believed morality is derived from man's exercising his unobstructed rationality.

POSTMODERNISM – A DESCRIPTION

Postmodernism is difficult to define, because to define it would violate the postmodernist's premise that no definite terms, boundaries or absolute truths exist. In this article, the term "postmodernism" will remain vague, since those who claim to be postmodernists have varying beliefs and opinions on issues.

Are nationalism, politics, religion, and war the result of a primitive human mentality? Is truth an illusion? How can Christianity claim primacy or dictate morals? The list of concerns goes on and on especially for those affected by a postmodern philosophy and lifestyle. For some, the questions stem from lost confidence in a corrupt Western world. For others, freedom from traditional authority is the issue. Their concern centers around the West's continued reliance on ancient and traditional religious morals, nationalism, capitalism, inept political systems, and unwise use and adverse impact of promoting "trade offs" between energy resources and environment, for economic gain.

According to the *Postmodern Worldview*, the Western world society is an outdated lifestyle disguised under impersonal and faceless bureaucracies. The postmodernist endlessly debates the modernist about the Western society needing to move beyond their primitiveness of ancient traditional thought and practices.

Their concerns, for example, often include building and using weapons of mass destruction, encouraging an unlimited amount of consumerism thus fostering a wasteful throwaway society at the sacrifice of the earth's resources and environment,

while at the same time not serving the fair and equitable socioeconomic needs of the populace.

Postmodernists believe that the West's claims of freedom and prosperity continue to be nothing more than empty promises and have not met the needs of humanity. They believe that truth is relative and truth is up to each individual to determine for himself. Most believe nationalism builds walls, makes enemies, and destroys "Mother Earth," while capitalism creates a "have and have not" society, and religion causes moral friction and division among people.

Postmodernism claims to be the successor to the 17th century Enlightenment. For over four centuries, "postmodern thinkers" have promoted and defended a New Age way of conceptualizing and rationalizing human life and progress. Postmodernists are typically atheistic and agnostic while some prefer to follow eastern religion thoughts and practices. Many are naturalist including humanitarians, environmentalists, and philosophers.

They challenge the core religious and capitalistic values of the Western world and seek change for a new age of liberty within a global community. Many prefer to live under a global, non-political government without tribal or national boundaries and one that is sensitive to the socioeconomic equality for all people.

POSTMODERNISM – RIGHT AND WRONG?

Postmodernists do not attempt to refine their thoughts about what is right or wrong, true or false, good or evil. They believe that there isn't such a thing as absolute truth.

A postmodernist views the world outside of themselves as being in error, that is, other people's truth becomes indistinguishable from error. Therefore, no one has the authority to define truth or impose upon others his idea of moral right and wrong.

Their self-rationalization of the universe and world around them pits themselves against divine revelation versus moral relativism. Many choose to believe in naturalism and evolution rather than God and creationism.

POSTMODERNISM – POLITICS

Postmodernists protest Western society's suppression of equal rights. They believe that the capitalistic economic system lacks equal distribution of goods and salary. While the few rich prosper, the mass populace becomes impoverished. Postmodernists view democratic constitutions as flawed in substance, impossible to uphold, and unfair in principle.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to the
CATECHETICAL FOUNDATION
OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MANILA
for this labor of love for the Church. Thank you for
sharing something of your faith and your stand to
defend life!

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