

CHERISH LIFE

John Paul Speaks

*Notable quotations from Pope John Paul II and
official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church*

“THE GREAT GIFT OF LIFE”

Society must learn to embrace once more the great gift of life, to cherish it, to protect it and to defend it against the culture of death, itself an expression of the great fear that stalks our times.

“WIDESPREAD MOBILIZATION”

In the 25 years which have passed since the judicial decision legalizing abortion in your country there has been a widespread mobilization of consciences in support of life. The pro-life movement is one of the most positive aspects of American public life.

“ALMOST UNIMAGINABLE INSENSITIVITY”

There are signs of an almost unimaginable insensitivity to the reality of what actually happens during an abortion, as evidenced in recent events surrounding so-called “partial-birth” abortion.

OPENING THE DOOR TO A CULTURE OF DEATH

A society with a diminished sense of the value of human life at its earliest stages has already opened the door to a culture of death.

HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

The unconditional defense of life must always include the message that true healing is possible, through reconciliation with the Body of Christ.

OPEN HEARTS AND HOMES

In the spirit of the coming Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, American Catholics should be more than ever willing to open their hearts and their homes to “unwanted” and abandoned children, to young people in difficulty, to the handicapped and those who have no one to care for them.

EUTHANASIA AND SUICIDE

Euthanasia and suicide are grave violations of God’s law...; their legalization introduces a direct threat to the persons least capable of defending themselves and it proves most harmful to the democratic institutions of society.

“ECUMENICAL PUBLIC WITNESS”

The fact that Catholics have worked successfully with members of other Christian communities to resist efforts to legalize physician-assisted suicide is a very hopeful sign for the future of *ecumenical public witness in your country*, and I urge you to build an even broader ecumenical and interreligious movement in defense of the culture of life and the civilization of love.

“LEGAL PROTECTION”

An essential feature of support for the inalienable right to life, from conception to natural death, is *the effort to provide legal protection for the unborn, the handicapped, the elderly and those suffering from terminal illness.*

“A HOSPITABLE SOCIETY”

In defending life you are defending an original and vital part of the vision on which your country was built. America must become, once again, a hospitable society, in which every unborn child and every handicapped or terminally ill person is cherished and enjoys the protection of the law.

(Source: *Ad limina* visit of bishops from California, Nevada, and Hawaii, October 2, 1998)

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