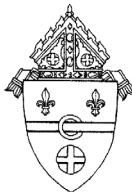


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**Diocese  
of  
Allentown**

*Secretariat for Catholic Life & Evangelization*

*Rev. 7/08*

# Faith

**What does the Catholic Church  
teach on issues affecting the  
dignity of the human person?**

# Action

**How can *you* respond to the  
social challenges of the day?**

*A resource of the*  
OFFICE FOR SOCIAL ACTION, Diocese of Allentown

**E**very human person is created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, each person's life and dignity must be respected, whether that person is an innocent unborn child in a mother's womb, whether that person worked in the World Trade Center or a market in Baghdad, or even whether that person is a convicted criminal on death row.

**W**e believe that every human person is sacred from conception to natural death, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it protects and respects the life and dignity of the human person.

*Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility*  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2003

and failure must be replaced by a new commitment to solidarity and the common good."

*Confronting a Culture of Violence: A Catholic Framework for Action,*  
U.S. Catholic Bishops 1994

Suggested Action:

Practice and promote forgiveness, generosity and concern for others.

**War**

"In the twenty-five years of Pontificate which the Lord has thus granted me, I have not failed to speak out before the Church and the world, inviting believers and all persons of good will to take up the cause of peace and to help bring about this fundamental good, thereby assuring the world a better future, one marked by peaceful coexistence and mutual respect."

*World Day of Peace Message 2004, Pope John Paul II*

Suggested Action:

Live the Prayer of St. Francis.

**Welcoming the Stranger**

"The presence of so many people of so many different cultures and religions in so many different parts of the United States has challenged us as a Church to a profound conversion so that we can become truly a sacrament of unity. We reject the anti-immigrant stance that has become popular in different parts of our country, and the nativism, ethnocentricity, and racism that continue to reassert themselves in our communities."

*Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity,*  
U.S. Catholic Bishops 2000

Suggested Action:

Always offer a smile or a kind word; look at the stranger with the eyes of Christ.

together with a common conviction that we can no longer tolerate the moral scandal of poverty in our land and so much hunger and deprivation in our world.”

*A Place at the Table: A Catholic Recommitment to Overcome Poverty and to Respect the Dignity of All God's Children, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 2002*

**Suggested Action:**

Join the Legislative Advocacy Network of the Social Action Bureau; let your voice be heard.

**Spirituality of Work**

“Work corresponds to the plan of God. Man was created in God’s image and was commanded to conquer the earth with all it contains and to rule the world in justice and holiness. ...This holds good also for our daily work. When men and women provide for themselves and their families in such a way as to be of service to the community as well, they can rightly look upon their work as a prolongation of the work of the Creator, their personal contribution to the fulfillment in history of the divine plan.”

*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, #34*

**Suggested Action:**

Advocate for just wages and employment for all; be just in your practices at work.

**Violence**

“Our faith challenges each of us to examine how we can contribute to an ethic which cherishes life, puts people before things, and values kindness and compassion over anger and vengeance. A growing sense of national fear

**Abortion**

“All human beings from their mother’s womb, belong to God who searches them and knows them, who forms them and knits them together with his own hands, who gazes on them when they are tiny shapeless embryos and already sees in them the adults of tomorrow...”

*The Gospel of Life, Encyclical of Pope John Paul II, 1995*

**Suggested Action:**

Pray for unwed pregnant mothers, single mothers and post-abortive women; become an informed citizen regarding pro-life legislation.

**Capital Punishment**

“For more than twenty-five years, the Bishops have called for an end to the death penalty in our land. Sadly, however, death sentences and executions in this country continue at an increasing rate. ...We appeal to all people of goodwill, and especially Catholics, to work to end the death penalty.”

*A Good Friday Appeal to End the Death Penalty, U.S. Catholic Bishops 1999*

“We envision no circumstances in modern American society that could justify its continued use. ...We sincerely hope and pray that Catholics and all people of good will become consistent witnesses to the sanctity of life and the dignity of every human being.”

*The Death Penalty: Choose Life, PA Catholic Bishops 2001*

**Suggested Action:**

Pray for prisoners, especially those on death row.

**Domestic Violence**

“Beginning with Genesis, Scripture teaches that women and men are created in God’s image. Jesus himself always respected the human dignity of men and women. Pope John Paul II reminds us that Christ’s way of acting,

the Gospel of his words and deeds, is a consistent protest against whatever offends the dignity of women.”

*When I Call for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women 2002*

Suggested Action:

Become familiar with the signs of domestic abuse; share them with a friend.

**Environmental Justice**

“At its core the environmental crisis is a moral challenge. It calls us to examine how we use and share the goods of the earth, what we pass on to future generations, and how we live in harmony with God’s creation. ...We ask the Catholic community: How are we called to care for God’s creation?”

*Renewing the Earth, U.S. Catholic Bishops 1991*

Suggested Action:

Reflect on consumerism; buy less, waste less.

**Euthanasia**

“Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable. Thus an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator.”

*Catechism of the Catholic Church #2277*

Suggested Action:

Complete a living will or durable power of attorney directive for yourself.

**Peace**

“The Church has always taught and continues today to teach a very simple axiom: *peace is possible*. Indeed, the Church does not tire of repeating that *peace is a duty*. It must be built on the four pillars indicated by Blessed John XXIII in his Encyclical *Pacem in Terris*: truth, justice, love and freedom. A duty is thus imposed upon all who love peace: that of *teaching these ideals to new generations*, in order to prepare for a better future.”

*An Ever Timely Commitment: Teaching Peace, Pope John Paul II, 2004*

Suggested Action:

Follow the example and teachings of Jesus; respect life, peace and justice

**Pornography**

“If the media’s choices need to be scrutinized, so do those of consumers. Some may contradict themselves by watching, listening to, or reading what they say they deplore. Those addicted to pornography, other sexually explicit material, and gratuitously violent material should get the help they need. ...Families and young people, working together in church and community groups, can help limit the influence of those who misuse the power of communication and encourage those who use it well.”

*Renewing the Mind of the Media, U.S. Catholic Bishops 1998*

Suggested Action:

Boycott businesses that sell pornography; support those that do not.

**Poverty**

“In our world and nation, many of our sisters and brothers live in poverty. ...They cannot find decent work, feed their families, educate their children, secure health care, or find adequate housing. ...As Catholics, we must come