

358. What is the root of Human Dignity? (Compendium of the CCC)

The dignity of the human person is rooted in his or her creation in the image and likeness of God. Endowed with a spiritual and immortal soul, intelligence and free will, the human person is ordered to God and called in soul and in body to eternal beatitude.

365. Why does everyone have a right to exercise freedom? (Compendium of the CCC)

The right to the exercise of freedom belongs to everyone because it is inseparable from his or her dignity as a human person. Therefore, this right is to be respected, especially in moral and religious matters, and it must be recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and a just public order.

"Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought." (St John Paul II)

Scripture

Genesis 1:26-27²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make humankind^[c] in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,^[d] and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

²⁷ So God created humankind^[c] in his image,
in the image of God he created them;^[d]
male and female he created them.

Leviticus 20:26²⁶ You shall be holy to me; for I the Lord am holy, and I have separated you from the other peoples to be mine. (Lev 20:26)

Luke 10: 25-37 The Parable of the Good Samaritan.

John 4:1-42 Jesus' encounter of Samaritan woman at the Well

1 Cor 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another.

Magisterial Understanding

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred, and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person. (USCCB Website)

Gaudium et Spes 19. The root reason for human dignity lies in man's call to communion with God. From the very circumstance of his origin man is already invited to converse with God. For man would not exist were he not created by God's love and constantly preserved by it; and he cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and devotes himself to

His Creator. Still, many of our contemporaries have never recognized this intimate and vital link with God, or have explicitly rejected it. Thus, atheism must be accounted among the most serious problems of this age, and is deserving of closer examination.

CCC 1701 "Christ, . . . in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, makes man fully manifest to himself and brings to light his exalted vocation."² It is in Christ, "the image of the invisible God,"³ that man has been created "in the image and likeness" of the Creator. It is in Christ, Redeemer and Savior, that the divine image, disfigured in man by the first sin, has been restored to its original beauty and ennobled by the grace of God.⁴

CCC 1711 Endowed with a spiritual soul, with intellect and with free will, the human person is from his very conception ordered to God and destined for eternal beatitude. He pursues his perfection in "seeking and loving what is true and good" (*GS* 15 § 2).

Dignity of the Human Person

CCC 2258 Human life is sacred because the creation of every person involves a direct, creative act of God that forever puts the person in a unique relationship to the Creator that is not enjoyed by any other earthly creature. God alone is the Master of life from beginning to end, and no person can assume for himself the right to directly destroy an innocent human life. (*Donum vitae*, 5)

Abortion

CCC 2270 Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.

Euthanasia –

CCC 2324 Intentional euthanasia, whatever its forms or motives, is murder. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator.

Our Value is not the result of our capacity to engage in certain kinds of behavior and actions. Our dignity is not from what we do but it is what we are. Our identity is rooted in the image and likeness of God.

Suicide

CCC 2325 Suicide is seriously contrary to justice, hope, and charity. It is forbidden by the fifth commandment.

Respect for health

2288 Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good.

2289 If morality requires respect for the life of the body, it does not make it an absolute value. It rejects a neo-pagan notion that tends to promote the *cult of the body*, to sacrifice everything for its sake, to idolize physical perfection and success at sports.

2290 The virtue of temperance disposes us to *avoid every kind of excess*: the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco, or medicine. Those incur grave guilt who, by drunkenness or a love of speed, endanger their own and others' safety on the road, at sea, or in the air.

2291 The *use of drugs* inflicts very grave damage on human health and life.

Respect for bodily integrity

2297 *Kidnapping* and *hostage taking* bring on a reign of terror; by means of threats they subject their victims to intolerable pressures. They are morally wrong. *Terrorism* threatens, wounds, and kills indiscriminately; it is gravely against justice and charity. *Torture* which uses physical or moral violence to extract confessions, punish the guilty, frighten opponents, or satisfy hatred is contrary to respect for the person and for human dignity. Except when performed for strictly therapeutic medical reasons, directly intended *amputations*, *mutilations*, and *sterilizations* performed on innocent persons are against the moral law.⁹¹

Avoiding war

CCC 2327 Because of the evils and injustices that all war brings with it, we must do everything reasonably possible to avoid it.

Male and Female CCC 2334 In creating both male and female in His image, God endows each with the same personal dignity, though this dignity is expressed in different ways.

The equal dignity of man and woman means that the uniqueness of each proceeds from the goodness and wisdom of the same God and are equally ordered towards the same ends, but it does not mean that man and woman have no differences or traits unique to each sex.

Chastity

CCC 2338 The chaste person maintains the integrity of the powers of life and love placed in him. This integrity ensures the unity of the person; it is opposed to any behavior that would impair it. It tolerates neither a double life nor duplicity in speech.

CCC 2349 There are three forms of the virtue of chastity: the first is that of spouses, the second that of widows, and the third that of virgins. We do not praise any one of them to the exclusion of the others. . . . This is what makes for the richness of the discipline of the Church.

Offenses against chastity CCC 2351 - 2356

Lust, Masturbation, Fornication, Pornography, Prostitution, Rape, Homosexual practices

The fecundity of marriage

CCC 2366 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.

Offenses against the Dignity of Marriage CCC 2380-2391

Adultery, Divorce, Polygamy, Trial Marriages, Free-unions, Contraception