

"**V**irtual reality and genetic science may give us the illusion of power, but we are not gods. We are not our own, or anyone else's, creator. Nor, for our own safety, should we ever seek to be. Even parents, entrusted with a special guardianship over new life, do not "own" their children any more than one adult can own another. And therein lies our only security. No one but the Creator is the sovereign of basic human rights -- beginning with the right to life" (US Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life*, 1998, n. 15).

"**T**he inviolability of the person, which is a reflection of the absolute inviolability of God, finds its primary and fundamental expression in the inviolability of human life. Above all, the common outcry, which is justly made on behalf of human rights -- for example, the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture -- is false and illusory if *the right to life*, the most basic and fundamental right and the condition of all other personal rights, is not defended with maximum determination" (John Paul II, *The Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World*, n.38)

"**W**e believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a "Gospel of life."... We cannot simultaneously commit ourselves to human rights and progress while eliminating or marginalizing the weakest among us. Nor can we practice the Gospel of life only as a private piety. American Catholics must live it vigorously and publicly, as a matter of national leadership and witness, or we will not live it at all" (US Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life*, 1998, n. 20).

"**B**ringing a respect for human dignity to practical politics can be a daunting task. There is such a wide spectrum of issues involving the protection of human life and the promotion of human dignity. Good people frequently disagree on which problems to address, which policies to adopt and how best to apply them. But for citizens and elected officials alike, the basic principle is simple: *We must begin with a commitment never to intentionally kill, or collude in the killing, of any innocent human life, no matter how broken, unformed, disabled or desperate that life may seem.* In other words, the choice of certain ways of acting is always and radically incompatible with the love of God and the dignity of the human person created in His image. Direct abortion is *never* a morally tolerable option" (US Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life*, 1998, n. 21).

"**A**dopting a consistent ethic of life, the Catholic Church promotes a broad spectrum of issues ...Catholic public officials are obliged to address each of these issues as they seek to build consistent policies which promote respect for the human person at all stages of life. *But being 'right' in such matters can never excuse a wrong choice regarding direct attacks on innocent human life.* Indeed, the failure to protect and defend life in its most vulnerable stages renders suspect any claims to the 'rightness' of positions in other matters affecting the poorest and least powerful of the human community" (US Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life*, 1998, n. 23).