

RCIA HO Class 24 - Six Pro-Life Issues

Three moral principles:

- 1) One may never do evil that good may come of it.
- 2) Every innocent human person has a right to life.
- 3) Lethal force can be used in self-defense if necessary.

Capital Punishment/War (self-defense, just war) “Assuming that the guilty party’s identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor”.

“If, however, non-lethal measures are sufficient to defend and protect people’s safety from the unjust aggressor, authority will limit itself to such means...”

“Today in fact, as a consequence of the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime...the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity are very rare, if not practically non-existent” (CCC 2267; EV 56).

Euthanasia = “an action or an omission which of itself or by intention causes death, in order that all suffering may be alleviated” (CCC 2276). “A person has a moral obligation to use ordinary or proportionate means of preserving his life” (USCCB Ethical and Religious Directives # 56).

Ordinary and proportionate vs. extraordinary and disproportionate means of support

Palliative care

Hydration and nutrition (obligatory until the body of the person, whose death is imminent, is no longer able to assimilate them).

Suicide “We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of” (CCC 2280).

Three conditions for a mortal sin = grave matter, full knowledge, full consent.

The person’s culpability or blame-ability may be compromised by grave psychological disturbances or other factors (see CCC 2282).

Contraception = “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” (CCC 2370). Always intrinsically evil (HV 14; CCC 2370).

The marital/conjugal act, i.e. sexual relations have two ends or purposes: to unite the couple, and to produce children. According to the Church’s teaching these two ends or purposes must never be separated or the marital act is no longer ordered to its proper ends. (The unitive and procreative ends may not be separated. (HV 12).

The Lambeth (Anglican) Conference in England in 1930 was the first Christian denomination to consider that contraception might be acceptable in some cases. Contraception was not permitted by ANY Christian denomination prior to 1930. The Church does not teach that every marital sexual act must lead to pregnancy. The Church teaches that every act in itself must remain open to life. NFP makes use of the woman’s cycle to know when to abstain from sexual acts (during the fertile period) if the couple seeks to delay pregnancy.

Abortion = “the deliberate and direct killing, by whatever means it is carried out, of a human being in the initial phase of his or her existence, extending from conception to birth.” Life begins at conception. “My body, my Choice”. Not your body, not your choice. Your responsibility upon having chosen to engage in sexual intercourse. Abortion is always and everywhere wrong under any circumstances because it take the life of an innocent human person. (see CCC 2270)

Same Sex Attraction/Homosexuality

The Church condemns all homosexual acts because they do not take place in the context of the married life, do not lead to true unity, and cannot end in procreation, but homosexual persons must always be respected as any other person must be respected. The origin/cause of same sex attraction seems to be primarily psychological/developmental rather than the result of some gene/DNA arrangement (nurture vs. nature). God does not “make” people homosexual. Sexual relations are only morally acceptable in the context of marriage (man and woman) because the two ends or purposes of sexual acts are 1) unity and 2) procreation (bonding and babies). Same sex unions are not marriages in the eyes of the Church. (CCC 2357)

RCIA WKSH Class 24 Pro-Life Issues

Three moral principles:

- 1) One may never do evil that good may come of it.
- 2) Every innocent human person has a right to life.
- 3) Lethal force can be used in self-defense if necessary.

Using the three moral principles above, answer the following questions:

- 1) **What is capital punishment? What does the Church have to say about it, and why does the Church teach that?** (Hint: self-defense) Capital punishment is also known as the death penalty. It involves killing a person as a punishment for a serious crime. The Church teaches that capital punishment can be used if necessary to defend society against a criminal but is rarely if ever necessary because the criminal can be incarcerated and thus prevented from hurting anyone.
- 2) **The Fifth Commandment says, “Thou shalt not kill”. Do soldiers in war break the Fifth Commandment by killing each other? (Careful) Why or why not?** War may be waged in self-defense to protect one nation from another unjust aggressor nation. The soldiers are not guilty of breaking the commandment because the enemy is not innocent, but attacking unjustly, and the soldiers are defending their own lives and the lives of their countrymen.
- 3) **Give a definition of euthanasia (not “youth in Asia”). What does the Church have to say about it, and why does the Church teach that?** (Hint: refer to the principles) Euthanasia, also known as mercy killing or assisted suicide, is the deliberate killing of another person to end his suffering. The Church teaches that every innocent person has a right to life, and that people who are suffering are able to offer that suffering to God as a sacrifice as Christ did on the Cross. Furthermore, God is always working in and through the soul of a person who is still alive. Killing that person stops God’s work.
- 4) **What is suicide? What happens to the souls of those who commit suicide? (Careful) Is suicide always sinful? (careful) (Hint: What is the difference between mortal and venial sin?)** Suicide is taking one’s own life deliberately. It is gravely sinful because our lives are not our own. We belong to God and to the rest of our community/society. God is always working through us and in us as long as we allow him. When a person takes his own life, he stops God’s work. Because it is gravely sinful to take one’s own life, it puts that person in a state of possible mortal sin (grave matter, full knowledge of the sin, and free will). If a person kills himself with all three in place, he commits a mortal sin and can’t be absolved because he is dead. His eternal salvation could be in jeopardy. It is generally supposed (and hoped) that people who commit suicide would not do so if they were mentally healthy and free from psychological defect. We commend their souls to the mercy of God. He alone knows what happens to them after death.
- 5) **What is abortion? What does the Church teach about abortion? Why does the Church teach that? (Refer to the principles) Can you explain how the laws of the United States don’t make sense with regard to abortion?** Abortion is the deliberate taking of the life of a child still in the womb. It is always and everywhere wrong because every child in the womb is an innocent human person and has a right to life. According to US law, a woman can choose to take the life of her unborn child. If she takes the life of her newly born child, it is murder. If a man murders a pregnant woman and the baby in the womb dies, he will be charged with two homicides. Either the child in the womb is a child and has a right to life or not. It does not depend upon what an individual wants at the moment.
- 6) **What does the Church teach about homosexual acts? Why does the Church teach that? Does the Church condemn homosexual persons? (Careful)** Homosexual acts are always and everywhere wrong because they cannot lead to life. Sexual acts have their proper place in the context of marriage and have two ends or purposes: the uniting of the couple and the procreation of children. People experiencing same sex attraction are to be respected just as is every other person. The situation may be thought of as a case of “love the sinner, hate the sin”.