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## **Confirmation Class. Lesson No. 6; April 13, 2021 Handout No. 1 – Beginning and End of Human Life**

Dear Students,

Thank you all for your great response to our last class where we discussed the real **NEED** and **BURNING NECESSITY** for a very specific **MISSION** to be accomplished by each and every single one of us. You might recall that all **WE DO** as a **CATHOLIC** comes from a very **OPEN, CLEAR** and powerful **BLUEPRINT** – that is our **NEW TESTAMENT** – in other words: the **GOSPELS** of **JESUS** and commentary on them in the form of other **NT Writings**. That **MISSION** today is as it was 2000 years ago, it will never change - which is to **PROCLAIM** the **GOOD NEWS** (Gospel, or **EVANGELIUM**) about **Jesus Christ Our Lord**. Today I hope to accomplish with you the next step in a greater understanding why you and your **CATHOLIC VOICE** is very much needed in today's world.

Therefore, as you can see, we do have a tremendous responsibility in not only **FORMING WELL** our own **CONSCIENCE** (inner – sanctuary, the seed of principles, the very part of me that distinguishes between right and wrong) but also my **MISSION** as a Catholic in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is to **HELP OTHERS** to learn how to form their **CONSCIENCE** well. Maybe not now, but very soon – as a **YOUNG CATHOLIC** - you will be exposed to the debate taking place between the so called **PRO – LIFE** and **PRO – CHOICE MOVEMENTS**.

In addition to the issues as to the **BEGINNING** of **HUMAN LIFE** - you will also face the issues of the **END OF LIFE** – for example: **Physician Assisted Suicide, EUTHANASIA; SUICIDE, SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS** leading to **DEATH**; etc. Separate handouts will show you the brief origin and description of each movement, yet now. let us move to some of the statistical data on the issues mentioned above.

1. As the **PEOPLE OF FAITH** – either people of no faith (non – religious, agnostic, atheistic, etc.) – or people of faith (religion) different than the Catholic Faith – either **THEY** like it or not, we **LIVE IN THIS WORLD** therefore **EVERYTHING** what happens around us **MATTERS** to us, it is important to us, and **INDIVIDUALLY** and as a group – for instance **CATHOLIC CHURCH** – we are able to **SHAPE, INFLUENCE, MAKE BETTER** – or **COMPLETELY IGNORE** – the reality surrounding us, the **TIMES** we **LIVE** in. That is why I propose today that as a group we should look a bit closer at the issues concerning all of us; namely the issues of the **BEGINNING** and the **END** of **LIFE**.

2. Statistical data doesn't lie; please see the most current available data on the issues of the Beginning and End of Life; globally (around the world), Data concerning the United States of America, and finally data available for the State of Connecticut.
3. Before we go to the numbers, let us remind ourselves of some basic definitions:
  - a) **Human Being:** a member of any of the races of Homo Sapiens Sapiens; person; man, woman, or child; (remember 8<sup>th</sup> Grade class?)
  - b) **Human Life:** As Catholics we believe in the dignity of human life. In the book of Genesis we hear how the Creator has created the human being in his image and likeness, male and female, he created them (Gn 1: 26 ss).
  - c) **Exceptions:** The Catholic Church in her teaching has always distinguished between the intentional taking of innocent human life, an intrinsic evil, and those **cases in which, for the sake of self-defense or the protection of the common good, the taking of life is not murder.** There are only two situations in which the regrettable taking of human life is not necessarily murder: the cases of an **unjust aggressor** and a **criminal.**
  - d) Regarding the two exceptions to the absolute prohibition against taking human life, the dignity of human life must always be kept in mind. In the case of the **legitimate defense of self or society**, the distinction is made concerning the double effect of the action. In legitimate self- defense, a person intends to preserve his own life and does not intend to kill the unjust aggressor (CCC 2263). A person who cannot defend himself without also bringing about the death of the unjust aggressor is morally justified in doing so. We observe this when a person who tries to kill a police officer is shot by the officer. The police officer is both protecting himself and acting as an agent of the state to protect the common good. There is the intentional protection of oneself and the common good and the unintentional taking of a human life.
  - e) Sometimes, more than ever over the last 30 years; we experience in the Western World a misunderstanding of the human person. Today there is a sense that the human person has dignity and value **only if he or she is wanted**, fully able to care for himself or herself, and able to be **completely autonomous.** Hence the unborn or the dying, since they are not autonomous and are unable to care for themselves, are considered not to have the same rights or dignity as others.