



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, January 29, 2023

Formed in the Womb

Human Dignity is the first principle of Catholic social teaching. It states: “The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the person is at the core of a moral vision for society. Our belief in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching.” (Catholic Charities Office for Social Justice)

This past Monday (1/23/23), the Church observed **a day of prayer for the legal protection of unborn children**. A reflection by Pope Benedict XVI on Psalm 139 “focuses on the loftiest, most marvelous reality of the entire universe: man, whose being is described as a wonder of God (v. 14)....

After pondering on the gaze and presence of the Creator that sweeps across the whole cosmic horizon, in the second part of the Psalm God turns his loving gaze upon the human being, whose full and complete beginning is reflected upon. He is still an unformed substance in his mother’s womb: the Hebrew term used has been understood by several biblical experts as referring to an embryo, described in that term as a small, oval, curled-up reality, but on which God has already turned his benevolent and loving eyes (v. 16)....

The idea in our psalm that God already sees the entire future of that embryo is extremely powerful. The days which that creature will live and fill with deeds throughout his earthly existence are already written in the Lord’s book of life. Thus, once again the transcendent greatness of divine knowledge emerges, embracing not only humanity’s past and present but also the span, still hidden, of the future. However, the greatness of this little unborn human creature, formed by God’s hands and surrounded by his love, also appears: a biblical tribute to the human being from the first moment of his existence.” (Magnificat, January 2023)

Resources: The **Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia**, in collaboration with other member organizations, serves the Greater Philadelphia Community by fighting for the right to life for the unborn, and by supporting mothers and their children during and after pregnancy.

One of their organizations is **Guiding Star Ministries**, a maternity home located in Philadelphia, PA providing independent housing and trauma-informed care to single moms. The program offers case management, counseling, parenting education, life skills, material resources, and social support to promote independence. For additional information, please reference their website:

<https://www.guidingstar.org>.

The Cenacle, a Community-Based Culture of Life Initiative in Frankford, partners with Catholic Social Services and the Capuchin Friars at the Padre Pio Prayer Center to build a sustainable, self-sufficient, and permanent pro-life presence through education, community engagement, compassionate service, and programming. For more information, see their website at <https://www.prolifeunion.org/the-cenacle>.

The fight against abortion is “part of the battle in favor of life from the moment of conception until a dignified, natural end. This includes the care of the mother during pregnancy, the existence of laws to protect the mother postpartum, and the need to ensure that children receive enough food, as well as providing healthcare throughout the whole length of life...” (Pope Francis: His Life in His Own Words, 2013)