

Missionary Oblates Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Office

2016 Lenten Reflection on Consistent Life



"In our own century, as at no other time in history, the 'culture of death' has assumed a social and institutional form of legality to justify the most horrible crimes against humanity: genocide, 'final solutions,' 'ethnic cleansings' and the massive 'taking of lives of human beings even before they are born or before they reach the natural point of death.'" (Pope John Paul II, **World Youth Day Address, August 1993**)

"A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy. I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." (**John 10:10**)

Reflection

During this season of Lent, we spend more time in prayer and we sacrifice daily comforts to better prepare for the celebration of the Easter Triduum when Christ sacrificed his own life that we might live more fully. Lent is also a good time to examine the ways in which we as a society and as individuals act more like the thief in the quote from John's gospel. The consistent life ethic, a component of Catholic social teaching, covers life issues from beginning to end. In our world today, here are some of the ways in which human life is diminished:

Today many abortions are performed every year.

The death penalty continues to be legal in more than two-dozen states in the U.S.

Refugees and immigrants around the world are not treated with the dignity that all human beings deserve.

Let us take time during this season to examine the ways in which we fail to recognize the goodness and dignity of human life around us. Let us pray for those who do not receive the dignity they deserve and let us sacrifice our own reluctance to preach the beauty of all human life to those around us.

May Saint Eugene De Mazenod inspire us to a greater solidarity, especially with those most in need.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for the precious gift of life. Help us to cherish and protect this gift, even in the midst of fear, pain, and suffering. Give us love for all people, especially the most vulnerable, and help us bear witness to the truth that every life is worth living. Grant us the humility to accept help when we are in need, and teach us to be merciful to all. Through our words and actions, may others encounter the outstretched hands of your mercy. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **AMEN.**

— USCCB 2015-16 Respect Life Program
Prayer Card: "Every Life is Worth Living"

Action

Read:

["The Sanctity of Human Life from Conception to Natural Death"](#) by Bishop Samuel Aquila (*Catholic News Agency*)

Learn about the work of the [Sant'Egidio community](#) and how to get involved with their efforts to end the death penalty and serve those in prison. (<http://santegidiousa.org/>)

Serve:

Volunteer at a soup kitchen or a pregnancy center in your community, or spend time with other parishioners in prayer on the issue of abortion.

Other Resources:

Visit the U.S. Bishops online resource hub for ideas on ways to strengthen your social ministry .

Communities of Salt and Light:

<http://www.wearesaltandlight.org/>