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“God is the lover of life”

In his October 10 general audience address, Pope Francis spoke forcefully about the evil of abortion and other sins against the fifth commandment.

10/10/2018

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

Today's catechesis is dedicated to the Fifth Word: *do not kill*. The fifth commandment: *thou shall not kill*. We are already in the second part of

the Decalogue, which regards relations with others; and this commandment, with its concise and categorical formulation, rises up like a wall of defence of the basic value in human relations. And what is the basic value in human relations? The value of life.[1] Therefore, *do not kill*.

It could be said that all the evil enacted in the world is summarized in this: disregard for life. Life is assaulted by wars, by organizations that exploit man (there are many things we read in the newspapers or see on the television news), by speculation on creation and by the throwaway culture, and by all the systems that submit human existence to opportunistic calculations, while a scandalous number of people live in a state unworthy of man. This is disregard for life, which is in a sense to kill.

A contradictory approach also permits the suppression of human life in the maternal womb in the name of safeguarding other rights. But how can an act that suppresses innocent and defenceless budding human life be therapeutic, civil or simply human? I ask you: it is right to do away with a human life to solve a problem? Is it right to hire a hitman to solve a problem? One cannot do this, it is not right to do away with a human being, albeit small, to solve a problem. It is like hiring a hitman to solve a problem.

Where does all this come from? Where do violence and the refusal of life come from? From fear. Indeed, the acceptance of the other is a challenge to individualism. Let us think, for example, of when we discover that a nascent life is the bearer of a disability, even a serious one. The parents, in these dramatic cases, need true closeness, true

solidarity, to face reality overcoming the understandable fears. Instead, they often receive hasty advice to interrupt the pregnancy, which is a figure of speech: “interrupt the pregnancy” means to “do away with” someone, directly.

A sick child is like any other person in need on earth, like an elderly person who is in need of assistance, like so many poor people who struggle to get by: he or she who is presented as a problem is in reality a gift from God, who can draw us out of our selfishness and make us grow in love. Vulnerable life indicates to us the way out, the way to save ourselves from an existence in which we are wrapped up in ourselves, and to discover the joy of love. And here I would like to pause a moment to give thanks. to thank the many volunteers, to thank the strong Italian volunteer sector, which is the

strongest I have ever known. Thank you.

And what leads man to refuse life? They are the idols of this world: money – it is best to get rid of this, because it will cost us –, power, and success. These are erroneous parameters for valuing life. What is the only authentic measure of life? It is love, the love with which God loves it! The love with which God loves life: this is the measure. The love with which God loves every human life.

Indeed, what is the positive meaning of the Word “Do not kill”? That God is the “lover of life”, as we heard a moment ago in the Bible reading.

The secret of life is unveiled by how it was treated by the Son of God Who made Himself man to the extent of assuming, on the cross, denial, weakness, poverty and pain (cf. *Jn* 13: 1). In every sick child, in every

weak elderly person, in every desperate migrant, in every fragile and threatened life, Christ is looking for us (cf. *Mt 25: 34-46*), He is looking for our heart, to reveal to us the joy of love.

It is worth welcoming every life, because every many is worth the blood of Christ Himself (cf. *I Pt 1: 18-19*). One cannot disregard what God has loved so much!

We must say to the men and women of the world: do not disregard life! The life of others, but also one's own, because the commandment "do not kill" applies also to this. It should be said to many young people: do not disregard your existence! Stop denying the work of God! You are a work of God! Do not underestimate yourself, do not disregard yourself with addictions that will ruin you and lead you to death!

Let no-one measure life according to the deceptions of this world, but let each person accept himself and others in the name of the Father Who created us. He is the “lover of life”: this is beautiful, “God is the lover of life.” And we are all so dear to Him, that He sent His Son for us. “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (*Jn* 3: 16).

[1] Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Istr. *Donum vitae*, 5: AAS 80 (1988), 76-77: “Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves “the creative action of God” (18) and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end.(19) God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for

himself the right to destroy directly
an innocent human being”.

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(04/04/2026)