

FAMILY FAITH FORMATION – 2023/2024

SAINT PATRICK'S & SAINT LUKE'S



THE PURPOSE OF FAMILY FAITH FORMATION

- To help you learn more about God so that you can deepen your own personal relationship with Him.
- To give you the confidence to speak about your Catholic faith with others.
- To help you as you guide your children in their own personal relationship with God.
- To provide you with an opportunity to spend more time with your immediate family and also with our parish family.
- To provide you with a short time for prayer and an opportunity to use the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

THE PURPOSE OF FAMILY FAITH FORMATION

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church is divided into 4 sections. They are:
 - The Creed – What we believe
 - The Sacraments – How we are sanctified
 - The Commandments – How we are to live
 - Prayer – How we relate and interact with God
- This year we will be studying the Sacraments

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- In 1995, Saint John Paul wrote an encyclical letter entitled “Evangelium Vitae.”
- It means “The Gospel of Life.”
- In this letter the Pope stated that we must be “Unconditionally Pro-Life.”

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- We are going to look at what this means.
- To do that we are going to do two things:
- First, dissect the title of this encyclical.
- Second, consider how Catholics are different from others in the world.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Dissecting the Title ...
- The word gospel comes from the Greek word Ευαγγελιον (euangélion) which means “good news.”
- In Latin the word became evangelium.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- The point is this:
- Gospel and Good News are synonymous.
- Both mean more or less the same thing.
- So, the Gospels are “Good News.”

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Why?
- Because the gospels contain information people did not have before that time.
- Information about God's will for us and God's plan for us.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- The Gospels contain the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning what we must do and believe to inherit eternal life.
- These teachings were unknown before this time. As Isaiah says, “The people walked in darkness.
- They did not know God, nor His love for us.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- What about the Gospel of life?
- What is the good news about life?
- Here we must make another distinction.
- Life means human life.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- The teachings of Jesus Christ concern us as human beings.
- The teachings of Jesus Christ pertain specifically to the human race.
- They are given to us. They are not for the animals or plants.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Let us now consider how Catholics are different from others in the world.
- First, we have the fullness of Revelation.
- This means we have all of the teachings of Jesus Christ. Other Christians are missing some of these teachings.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- To further understand how Catholics are different from the world, let us look at what the world was like before the coming of Jesus Christ with regard to human life and how it was treated. The contrast is significant.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Saint Paul says that,
- “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28).”

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- In contrast to this teaching, up until Christ, there was only tribalism.
- Those not of your tribe were not considered human beings or did not have the rights tribal members had.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- This fact had a number of consequences.
 - You could steal from non-tribal members.
 - You could rape non-tribal members.
 - You could kill non-tribal members.
 - You could enslave non-tribal members.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Non-Christian areas of the world (such as the Middle East and Africa) still practice tribalism.
- This explains their behavior, a behavior foreign to the way Christians are taught to think and behave towards others.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Jesus taught that everyone was our neighbor.
- Recall here the Parable of the Good Samaritan.
- Living out this teaching made Catholics much different from others in the world.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Jesus said,
- “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery (Mk 10:11-12).”

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- In contrast to this teaching, up until Christ, divorce among pagans and Jews was common.
- Roman emperors were even known to enter into incestuous relationships.
- Women had few rights and children were often raised without both parents or simply abandoned when orphaned.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Our Lord's teachings on marriage led to cultural changes.
- Christian women now had security that they would not be abandoned for another. They would also come to be seen as equal partners in their marriages. Also, children were raised in stable homes.
- Living out this teaching made Catholics much different from others in the world.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Jesus said,
- “Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you visited Me (Mt 25:34-36).”

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE



THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- In contrast to this, pagans did nothing of the sort. Those in need were ignored.
- Pagans fled in the face of plagues. They did not care for the sick.
- The needy had to beg for food and clothing at the city gates. Even today in India, the dying simply die on the streets as people walk around them.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- This teaching inspired our Lord's followers to care for the sick and the homeless and the widow and the orphan.
- Christians cared for their sick. It was also Christians who established hospitals. In fact, there were no hospitals in pre-Christian times nor were there any organized systems of care for the sick.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Christians cared for their handicapped.
- Christians cared for their elderly.
- This prompted the pagans to remark, “See how those Christians love one another.”
- Living out this teaching made Catholics much different from others in the world.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE



THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Jesus said,
- “If you love me you will keep my commandments (Jn 14:15).”
- One of His commandments is this: “You shall not kill.”
- Note: this only pertains to people not animals.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- In contrast to this, pagans had little respect for life.
- You could kill your slaves.
- Abortions were common, and even infanticide was accepted. You would simply expose the infant, that is, leave it outside to die from the elements.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- A letter written by a certain Hilarion to his pregnant wife illustrates this attitude. In it Hilarion wrote, “Know that I am still in Alexandria. And do not worry if they all come back and I remain in Alexandria. I ask and beg you to take good care of our baby son, and as soon as I receive payment I will send it up to you. If you are delivered of child [before I get home], if it is a boy keep it, if a girl discard it. You have sent me word, ‘Don’t forget me.’ How can I forget you. I beg you not to worry.”

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Our Lord's teachings on the goodness of life changed this attitude as well.
- In the Didache an early Christian document (which means teachings), it says:
- You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not seduce boys. You shall not commit fornication. You shall not steal. You shall not practice magic. You shall not use potions. You shall not procure [an] abortion, nor destroy a newborn child" (*Didache* 2:1–2 [A.D. 70]).

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- In summary then, the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning the good news about life were very different from the pagans. They taught that each individual human being is precious in the eyes of God.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Christians were different because:
- All were treated as brothers and sisters in Christ and no distinctions were made on account of race or sex.
- Marriage was sacred.
- Those in need were to be cared for.
- All innocent lives were to be protected.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Several more points ...

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- We believe that every human soul is directly created by God.
- That means there was a time when we did not exist.
- We have a dignity or worth that cannot be detached from us.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- This dignity is for two reasons:
 - We were made in God's image and God is good, therefore we too are created good.
 - We were purchased with the Blood of Jesus Christ whose value is infinite. That means each of us is priceless.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- All Cells are distinguished by two things: their behavior and their characteristics.
- Conception takes place in less than a second and the new organism (whether for humans or animals) although only one cell now has different behaviors and characteristic from the parent egg and sperm cells. This means it is a new organism.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE



THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Abortion is the killing of innocent human life and is a violation of the 5th Commandment and a grave sin.
- Also, many forms of hormonal contraception and IUDs are known to cause early abortions and therefore, their use is immoral.
- These are violations of the teachings of Jesus and the Gospel of Life.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Euthanasia is now becoming accepted as a way of dealing with suffering in life.
- It is also called physician assisted suicide.
- Euthanasia is always immoral and violates the 5th Commandment.

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- Euthanasia is the killing of another either by administering lethal drugs or by failing to provide those things which are necessary for life, nourishment, hydration, respiration, and cleanliness. These things fall under the category of “care” and not “treatment.”

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- If all life is not protected because of its inherent dignity, then when and why life is protected becomes arbitrary.
- This essentially means that “Might makes right.” As long as you are stronger than someone else, you can decide their fate.
- However, who wants to live in that kind of world where only the strongest would be safe?

THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

- In the face of our culture's descent into a new paganism, we Catholics must continue to uphold these teachings in our lives and in our families.
- We must remember that these teachings are "good news." We must tell others about them.
- That is what it means to live out the Gospel of Life.

HOMEWORK

- Parents at Home:
 - Read from the Catechism:
 - CCC 2258-2262 (Respect for Human Life)
 - CCC 2270-2275 (Abortion)
 - CCC 2276-2279 (Euthanasia)
 - Watch the videos on respecting life.

HOMEWORK

- Parents at Home:
 - See that your children complete their homework assignments.
 - Discuss why Catholics respect all human life and why we must never kill innocent human life either outside or inside the womb.
 - Make sure your children are saying their daily prayers.