

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*Icon of Saint Gregory of Armenia -- September 30th*



## Continued from *Issues for Catholic Voters: 2012 Edition*

### VI Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

*Intentional euthanasia, whatever its forms or motives, is murder. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator. (CCC 2324)*

THE CHURCH VIEWS EUTHANASIA AND ASSISTED SUICIDE as the direct killing of a human being and, therefore, an immoral act. There once was a solid moral and legal consensus opposing it, but tragically, over the past two decades, some state laws have changed to now permit the deliberate taking of the life of someone terminally ill.

Two states—Oregon and Washington—have laws permitting physician-assisted suicide. Three states—North Carolina, Utah, and Wyoming—have no statutes criminalizing assisted suicide. Thirty-four states still consider suicide a crime, while nine consider it a common-law crime.

Support for euthanasia and assisted suicide is not a matter of prudential judgment; there are never any reasons that justify such killing. “Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable” (CCC 2277).

A Catholic politician, whether in a state legislature or in the Congress, who supports this practice is dissenting from a Church teaching that does not admit of any qualification. For example, it does not matter if a terminally ill patient asks to be euthanized; the Church forbids any Catholic from assenting to such a request.

Scrutinizing the position of Catholic politicians on this issue is just as important as on the issue

of abortion. What was once unthinkable—the state endorsement of euthanasia—became a reality when Oregon enacted a law legalizing physician-assisted suicide in 1997. Since then, similar legislation has been introduced in other states. This is an initiative that every Catholic citizen and politician must oppose.

Those who have watched the spread of the culture of death since the *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973 are not surprised that the same attitude which led to the legalization of abortion has opened the door to arguments in support of euthanasia.

The intrinsic dignity and sacredness of human life—the inalienable right to life—have been replaced by the primacy of personal preference and the protection of personal satisfaction—even mere pleasure.

In *Evangelium Vitae* (1995), Pope John Paul II spoke directly to that issue: “When the prevailing tendency is to value life only to the extent that it brings pleasure and well-being, suffering seems like an unbearable setback, something from which one must be freed at all costs.”

Rather than subjectively ending the lives of those who suffer, John Paul II has said that true compassion calls us to share in their suffering. In so doing, we may use appropriate levels of palliative care—pain relief—as long as we do not remove their personal experiences of life and death.

The ban against euthanasia does not mean that caregivers and families must assent to extraordinary medical procedures to keep their loved ones alive. To reject such treatment is not euthanasia, “It is the refusal of ‘over-

zealous' treatment. Here, one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted" (CCC 2278).

Choosing to stop such treatment is a prudential judgment belonging to the patient's family and the assisting physician. The need to make such judgments demonstrates how laws allowing euthanasia harm the relationship between doctors and patients. The Hippocratic Oath, taken by physicians since before the time of Christ, specifies that the physician "do no harm." But the euthanasia option fundamentally changes this relationship: Patients can no longer trust their doctors to absolutely seek life over death.

But what if a patient seeks help in hastening his or her death? Some argue that this consent justifies assisted suicide. Yet the Church teaching is clear in its rejection of suicide ever being morally permissible, even under conditions of extreme suffering. "Suicide contradicts the natural inclination of the

human being to preserve and perpetuate his life...[and] is contrary to love for the living God" (CCC 2281).

Just as a person should not "put someone out of his misery" by means of euthanasia, he should not assist someone in committing suicide. These are among those acts that "are a supreme dishonor to the Creator" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 27).

Thus, along with abortion, a politician's support for euthanasia disqualifies him or her from the Catholic vote.

### Summary

- ✓ The ban against euthanasia and assisted suicide admits no exception.
- ✓ Declining extraordinary means of treatment is allowable as a prudential judgment.
- ✓ The growing acceptance of euthanasia and assisted suicide rests on the assumption that pain detracts from the value of life, but life itself is always good.

## VII Bioethics

*[M]ethodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God. (CCC 159)*

BIOETHICS HAS MOVED TO CENTER STAGE in the arena of public policy and morality. The past few years have witnessed highly visible debates on human embryonic stem-cell research and cloning. Since the future of such research has a direct impact on the life and death of human persons, it's a life issue for all Catholics.

In recent years, the Church has been highly supportive of technological advances in

medicine, pursued in conformity with basic moral principles and respectful of the inherent dignity of life:

*Science and technology by their very nature require unconditional respect for fundamental moral criteria. They must be at the service of the human person, of his inalienable rights, of his true and integral good, in conformity with the plan and the will of God. (CCC 2294)*

### Assisted Reproduction

Catholics take seriously what science reveals about human embryo-genesis and intrauterine human development. Human life begins at conception, and the gift of a child is linked with the conjugal act. Therefore, the Church

opposes abortion and embryo-destructive research and rejects reproductive procedures that attempt to substitute for the marital act, such as in vitro fertilization (IVF) and artificial insemination. In this way, the Church upholds the sanctity of human life and the dignity of the marriage union.

With the use of so-called assisted reproduction, we can see a link between these ideals and the practices that threaten to undermine them. The most disturbing is the use of cryopreservation (i.e., freezing) to store “spare” embryos. This practice, in effect, sentences an embryonic human being to a state of permanent suspension—literally frozen in time. For many, these embryos do not represent a human life but only biological material for scientific experimentation, such as stem-cell research.

### **Stem Cells**

The Church strongly supports biomedical science, while firmly opposing the killing of human embryos in the name of research. To experiment on unused, unimplanted, or frozen embryos violates Church teaching and “reduces human life to the level of simple ‘biological material’” (*Evangelium Vitae*, 14). The fact that surplus embryos have been effectively orphaned does not reduce them to the non-human status of expendable research material, nor does it remove their rights to be protected by law.

Under the administration of President George W. Bush, federal funding for embryonic stem-cell research was restricted to stem-cell lines that were created prior to August 9, 2001. In May 2009, President Barack Obama lifted the restrictions on federal funding for embryo-destructive research, although a few

months later a federal district court judge in Washington, D.C., temporarily blocked Obama’s executive order by finding it in violation of the ban on federal funding for such research.

What makes the practice of using embryonic cells especially abhorrent is the fact that scientists have made significant progress using adult stem cells, to the point that they now offer a promising alternative. Many people are alive today as a result of therapies using adult stem cells, while no one has ever been cured of any disease by embryonic stem-cell therapies.

### **Cloning**

Some researchers seek to “harvest” tissues and organs by creating life through a cloning process known as “somatic cell nuclear transfer” (SCNT). The Church teaches that cloning is morally wrong: “These techniques, insofar as they involve the manipulation and destruction of human embryos, are not morally acceptable, even when their proposed goal is good in itself” (Pope John Paul II, “Address to International Congress on Transplants”).

Members of Congress often deal with legislation introduced to fund the creation of human clones that can be killed for the sake of medical research. Presidents Bush and Obama have opposed any federal funding for cloning.

In all, 15 states have laws prohibiting human cloning. In 1997, California was the first state to ban reproductive cloning. Since then, Arkansas, Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Rhode Island, New Jersey, North Dakota, South Dakota, Maryland, and Virginia have enacted measures to prohibit reproductive cloning.

No Catholic can justify a policy allowing the creation of human clones for destruction—it's not a judgment call, ever. No projection of benefit derived from the scientific research can make such a practice morally acceptable.

### Summary

✓ Since science serves human ends, not its own, scientific research must always respect the moral law.

- ✓ Science must respect the inherent dignity of the human person.
- ✓ Unused and unwanted embryos must be treated with the respect afforded to other human beings.
- ✓ Killing embryos or clones cannot be justified in the name of therapeutic (i.e., medical) benefits to other persons.

---

## Ukrainian or English

<http://www.cnewa.org/default.aspx?ID=1932&pagetypeID=8&sitecode=HQ&pageno=1>

12 Sep 2012 – By Barb Frazee

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (CNS) — Many Ukrainian Catholic leaders serving the faithful outside the homeland face a dilemma: Do they serve the needs of the new immigrants and elderly by using Ukrainian in liturgies, or do they minister in English to keep younger people coming to church?

Ukrainian “has revived a little with the new immigrants,” who want their native language used in church so their children will know how to speak it, said Archbishop Stefan Soroka of Philadelphia. Some places, he added, place an “inordinate emphasis” on Ukrainian- language liturgies.

Yet, especially among teens and younger Americans, “even those who speak Ukrainian don’t want to go to a Ukrainian service,” he said. Parents tell priests they are tired of arguing with their children about going to a service they do not understand.

“You don’t hear them protesting — they just walk away,” he told Catholic News Service.

In large Ukrainian Catholic parishes, liturgies are offered in Ukrainian and English. Of his 67 parishes, he said, only two would not offer bilingual homilies.

But the Philadelphia Archdiocese’s situation is even a bit more complicated: Many immigrants are from Eastern Ukraine, and their language is Russian, so priests minister to them in their native language. This upsets Ukrainian nationalists, Archbishop Soroka said, “but we can’t hold back evangelization because of Ukrainian nationalists.”

“If we don’t reach out to them,” Russian-speaking Ukrainians will go to Orthodox or evangelical churches, he said.

In Chicago, which has a large ethnic Ukrainian population, some fourth-generation Ukrainians still speak their homeland’s language, and many young people are forced to learn it, said Bishop Richard Seminack.

Yet after about age 15, “you become adapted to the American culture” and lose the language, he said. If liturgies are offered only in Ukrainian, young people “leave the church or go to the Roman Catholic Church or no church at all.”

Bishop Seminack, whose diocese includes the whole Western United States and extends into Hawaii, said in other Midwestern communities and along the West Coast, parishes have adapted English into the liturgy. But in Chicago, three

of the Sunday liturgies at the cathedral use only Ukrainian, and only one is celebrated in English.

In the diocese that includes Great Britain and Ireland, “We still don’t have liturgies in English ... in all our churches,” said Bishop Hlib Lonchyna.

“It’s a problem and it’s a blessing,” he said. “It’s a blessing’ because — especially in London — new immigrants feel at home in the church.

But some parish priests cannot speak English well enough to celebrate English-language liturgies, and some elderly Ukrainian Catholics “get very tense when things get celebrated in English,” he told Catholic News Service.

“Because of this mentality, we have lost a lot of people,” he added.

Bishop Peter Stasiuk of Melbourne, Australia, said language is not an issue in his diocese, which includes Australia and New Zealand. Most immigrants from Ukraine arrived after World War II, and “we have integrated into the Australian community very well,” he told Catholic News Service.

The church has been using primarily English “for quite a while” and uses Ukrainian only “where people request it and where it is necessary.”

**“The church’s role is to evangelize the people, not to teach language,” he said, adding, “Our biggest problem isn’t language, it’s secularization.”**

The concept of what gives the Ukrainian Catholic Church its identity is “a work in progress,” said Winnipeg Archbishop Lawrence Huculak. Liturgy, music, icons, traditions vestments all “work to attract people to the faith,” he said. But church leaders must balance those items’ importance against the faith itself, he said.

When Ukrainian Catholics prepare traditional

Easter food and bring it for a blessing Holy Saturday or early Easter morning, it is “a unique combination of food, culture, tradition and prayer life,” he said. Some items from Good Friday might still be set up in the church and “it just all works together.”

“The culture has stayed alive and found new creativity,” he said. “Unfortunately, perhaps language is the most difficult (cultural aspect) to maintain.”

Archbishop Huculak noted that French-Canadian Catholics face similar language problems.

The head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kiev-Halych, Ukraine, spent years working in Argentina.

“Our most vibrant parishes in Argentina are Spanish-speaking,” he said.

When Archbishop Shevchuk met with young people at a Winnipeg parish Sept. 7, he told them not to worry about not being able to speak Ukrainian.

**“This is not a church of Ukrainians, it’s a church of Christ,” Archbishop Shevchuk said. “We are a global church. We are a church of the Ukrainian tradition.”**

### **God’s Extended Hand**

FOCUS (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) has provided us with a special bin for collecting donations of clothing, toiletries, etc. to be distributed at GEH. It is located near the door of the church hall.

*THE ORTHODOX STUDY BIBLE*  
*ON THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY*

*“For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.” – Luke 1:48*

For two thousand years the Church has preserved the memory of the Virgin Mary as the prototype of all Christians - the model of what we are to become in Christ. The tradition of the Church holds that Mary remained a virgin all her life (see note on Matthew 12:46-50). While lifelong celibacy is not a model for all Christians to follow, Mary's spiritual purity, her wholehearted devotion to God, is certainly to be emulated.

Mary is also our model in that she was the first person to receive Jesus Christ. As Mary bore Jesus Christ in her womb physically, all Christians now have the privilege of hearing God within them spiritually. By God's grace and mercy we are purified and empowered to become like Him.

The honor we give to Mary also signifies our view of who Jesus is. From early times the church has called her Mother of God (Greek Theotokos, lit. "God-Bearer"), a title which implies that her Son is both fully man and fully God. As His Mother, Mary was the source of Jesus' human nature; yet the One she bore in her womb was also the eternal God.

Therefore, because of her character and especially because of her role in God's plan of salvation, Christians appropriately honor Mary as the first among the saints. The archangel Gabriel initiated this honor in his address to her: "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" (Luke 1:28). This salutation clearly indicates

that God Himself had chosen to honor Mary. Her favored status was confirmed when she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was then six months pregnant with John the Baptist. Elizabeth greeted Mary with these words: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:42,43). And Mary herself, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, predicted the honor that would be paid her throughout history: "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed" (Lk 1:48).

In obedience to God's clear intention, therefore, the Orthodox Church honors Mary in icons, hymns, and special feast days. We entreat her, as the human being who was most intimate with Christ on earth, to intercede with her Son on our behalf. We ask her, as the first believer and the Mother of the Church, for guidance and protection. We venerate her - but we do not worship her, for worship belongs to God alone.

In Matins, Vespers, and all the services of the hours of prayer, we sing this hymn, which expresses Mary's unique place in creation.

"It is truly right to bless you, O Theotokos, ever-blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, without defilement you gave birth to God the Word: True Theotokos, we magnify you."

## ***Ukrainian Catholic leader: Global economy reflects spiritual crisis***

By Deborah Gyapong: Catholic News Service

SAINTE-ADELE, Quebec (CNS) -- Western secularism underlies the worldwide economic crisis and challenges the future of Ukraine, the head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church told Canada's bishops.

"The current economic crisis is merely the symptom of a much deeper spiritual and cultural crisis," Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk told the annual plenary of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops Sept. 25. "As Western society rejects old moral structures and values, it finds that its moral GPS has no fixed and stationary points of reference."

Archbishop Shevchuk said the church must find "new courage" to proclaim the truth of the Gospel to contemporary society to provide "an anchor and compass."

"We live in societies where virtue and goodness are frequently a veneer for religious intolerance, personal gratification and moral decay," he said. "Secularism would like us to be closed in a little box of Sunday worship."

The former Soviet Union used that approach to religion, he said.

"Separation of church and state has become separation of faith values from society, yet our mission is to preach the word of God to all and to be a constant sign of God's loving presence through social ministry," he said. "Let us not be afraid of the totalitarianism of political correctness and speak the truth regardless of whom we might offend, whether it is on same-sex marriage or on the genocide of abortion."

He recalled that, under communism, the church witnessed "in the catacombs" as well in open defiance to the regime.

"So many martyrs and confessors have suffered for the faith in the last century. Let their example and witness be an inspiration for all of us," Archbishop Shevchuk said.

Ukraine is experiencing social and economic challenges and has changed dramatically, even in the last five years, he said. The country seems "torn between old influences and new attempts to integrate with the broader European community."

Contemporary Ukrainian society mistrusts government, politicians and civil institutions, but the church, especially the Ukrainian Catholic Church "holds great moral authority."

"The majority of Ukrainian citizens do not identify with any of the existing churches, but have a hunger for God and are open to the missionary work of the church," he said. "In such circumstances the experience of new evangelization, which we are gradually acquiring, may become a precious treasure, which we would hope to share with the entire Catholic Church."

The Ukrainian Catholic Church is marking the 100th anniversary of the arrival of her first bishop in Canada. Archbishop Shevchuk had presided at a Sept. 9-16 Synod of Bishops for the worldwide Ukrainian Catholic Church in Winnipeg, and he thanked the Canadian Catholic bishops for their "fraternal spirit of cooperation."

"My brother bishops here in Canada speak highly of this body and greatly appreciate the support and understanding our church receives throughout Canada," he said. "This is not the case in other parts of the world."

"Today there are tens of thousands of migrant workers from Ukraine in several European countries," he said. "That is why it is so important for us to share in your Canadian experience worldwide, testifying that the presence of the Eastern churches, with their traditions and structures, is not a threat but a richness of the Catholic community, which is unity in diversity."



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква  
Святого Йоана Хрестителя  
St. John the Baptizer  
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

4400 Palm Avenue  
La Mesa, CA 91941  
Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

**Website:** [stjohnthebaptizer.org](http://stjohnthebaptizer.org)

**Pastor:** Fr. James Bankston  
[frjames@mac.com](mailto:frjames@mac.com)

Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

*Where the Two are, There also is Christ*

Where shall I find the strength to describe adequately the joy of a marriage contracted in Church, confirmed at the altar, sealed by the blessing which the angels announce and God the Father ratifies?

What a beautiful pair two believers make when they put in common their hopes, their ideals, their way of living, their attitude of service! Both of them are servants of the same Lord, without the slightest difference of body or soul. So they pray together, they kneel together, they fast together.

They teach one another, they encourage one another, they support one another. In the congregation they stand together, they are together at the table of the Lord, together in trials, in persecution, and in joys. There is no danger of their hiding something from one

another nor of their avoiding or annoying each other.

They are happy to visit the sick and help the needy. They give alms with no ulterior motive, they share in the Eucharistic Sacrifice unhurriedly, they carry out their duties every day without wearying. They make the sign of the cross openly, they give God thanks without any reserve, they bless themselves without any shyness in their voices. They recite the psalms and hymns in alternate voices and compete to see which of them sings the praises of God best.

Seeing and hearing this, Christ rejoices and gives His peace to the couple. Where the two are, there also is Christ.

*Tertullian*