



# **PASTORAL CARE OF HUMAN LIFE**

**Webinar 18 april 2024**

## **FINAL CLOSING REMARKS**

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FOR A PASTORAL CARE OF HUMAN LIFE

WEBINAR, APRIL 18, 2024

*CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING*

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I would like to try to define some essential points, a sort of compass, so that, starting from today, we can try to give shape in every particular Church to a *concrete pastoral care of human life*.

**Requirements:**

- ✓ Pastoral action always underlies a *pastoral theology*, that is, a systematic practical reflection referring to life.
- ✓ In pastoral action, the Church expresses God's continuous and thoughtful intervention in everyone's history.
- ✓ The *Gospel of Life* is not a simple reflection, even if original and profound. It is a concrete and personal reality, because it consists in the announcement of *the very Person of Jesus*. This aspect should not be forgotten when we must defend and protect every single human life.
- ✓ The human person is the concrete point of contact between the life of each man and the life of Christ. For this reason, the expression **human life** refers to every single person, who must always be protected, welcomed and accompanied.

**Characteristics of pastoral action:**

- ✓ It must be **ecclesial, planned, medium-long term, coordinated** between the various subjects who implement it, **interconnected** in order to integrate the training of lay people in every pastoral area on urgent life issues, **consistent** with Christian anthropology and the Magisterium.
- ✓ **Unitary**, to keep all the dimensions of the person (biological, moral, psychological, spiritual, affective, intellectual) united and integrated. In the training approach and discernment, which are carried out in pastoral care, attention must be paid not to fragment the person.

- ✓ **Integrated**, so that the training and theoretical proposal are expressed in concrete actions of volunteering, listening and support.
- ✓ **Inserted** in a dialogue within the Church, at a universal level (with competent bodies of the Holy See/Dicasteries), at a particular level (between Episcopal Conferences and Dioceses), with other organizations (Universities, Associations, etc.).
- ✓ **Well-founded** on the **prudential method** (see, think, act and generate); starting from a careful look at reality, to teach discernment on issues that concern life, to develop **clarity of judgment** in pastoral action.
- ✓ **Attentive** to the various phases of human life and to those conditions of social life that are a cause of inequality and injustice.

### **Training:**

- ✓ Dialogues, specialized and interdisciplinary training moments within Episcopal Conferences and particular Churches, for pastors and lay people.
- ✓ Seminars to **develop** a Pastoral of Life at a local level, with those in charge of pastoral care.
- ✓ Work in dialogue with parishes, schools, families, associations and movements for a shared effort to develop the "culture of life".
- ✓ Dedicate specific attention to the training of parents and teachers.
- ✓ Create **listening and support services** on issues identified as urgent in local situations, at a widespread level.
- ✓ Draw on the training resources of the Family Institutes of Catholic **Universities** that adhere to the *Family Global Compact* and Christian anthropology, suggesting training courses according to the needs of local pastoral care.
- ✓ Promote a commitment to the **pastoral care of children** in parishes and dioceses: it is urgent to begin training children in the value of human life with experiences and formative moments beyond catechism. **Pastoral creativity** is needed to train children with appropriate methods and languages.

Let us not be discouraged by secularization, by the decline of Christian values, by the laws that legalise the suppression of life in every Country in the world. Each new generation is given the opportunity to know the truth about the inestimable value of every human life.

Let's leave aside thoughts like "it can't be done", "we don't have the strength". Let's remember that "Perfect is the enemy of good", let's be proactive, rather than waiting for the perfect moment that will never come. There are lives waiting for your help, families who need you now.

We do not want to work on abstract concepts, because the life that we are called to promote and protect is not a concept, but always manifests itself in a person in the flesh: a conceived child, a poor person on the side of a road, a sick person alone and despondent, an abused woman.

Every man is called by God to enjoy the fullness of life and is entrusted to the maternal care of the Church. I encourage you to act on a cultural and educational level to **enlighten consciences**, so that they are able to grasp the meaning that lies behind every weak, small, lonely or fragile person. Every human life, unique and unrepeatable, constitutes an inestimable value to be announced and a call to solidarity and brotherly love for the entire human family. Therefore, with Saint John Paul II, we remind the world of the appeal he addressed to all of us almost thirty years ago: respect, defend, love and serve life, every human life! (*Evangelium Vitae* 5).