Manifesto on the Right to Life in the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man.

10 December 1948-10 December 2018

Foreword

The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man was adopted at the end of three terrible decades characterized by two world wars resulting in tens of millions of deaths, material and moral devastation and at the onset of a war, called the “cold” war because it wasn’t declared but in progress with the potential use of even more powerful destructive weapons. The Declaration lays the foundations for a lasting peace because it refers to the «recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world». It does not entrust peace to the force of arms but to an 'act of the mind', namely the recognition of the inherent – namely the intrinsic – dignity of each human being. The violation of the right of man has continued in many local wars, of various dimensions, with the aggression of terrorism, with the refusal to welcome the poor and the victims of huger and violence. Even more serious is the refusal to recognize the dignity of those human beings who are the smallest and the poorest: the unborn. It is not possible to reconcile ourselves to the millions of abortions carried out with the support of the State and the incalculable number of human beings eliminated in the context in vitro fertilization techniques. Still more unacceptable is the assuetude in relation to the claim by a certain part of feminism – also encouraged by powerful international lobbies – that abortion be considered as a 'fundamental human right', as if the just movement for the liberation of women from a social and family minority could possibly find its conclusion and reach its apex in the right of women to suppress their own children. The celebration of the rights of man is the right occasion to focus meditation on two points: the human identity of the unborn – a member of the human family– and maternity as the sign of love for life, specifically expressed by pregnancy.

1. The identity of the unborn. Modern science and reason prove that the unborn is a human being and is, therefore, entitled to human dignity like any other human being. There are many documents that prove the full humanity of the unborn child. Here, it is enough to recall, on the Italian side, the repeated opinions of the National Committee for Bioethics and the judgement of the Constitutional Court no. 35 of 10 February 1997. When justifying publicly the destruction of embryos, no-one dares to deny the human identity of the unborn, but dwells only on the female condition with an ambiguity of language that hides the truth by talking about the 'sexual and reproductive health', of 'women' instead of 'mothers', 'voluntary interruption of pregnancy' or 'voluntary interruption of pregnancy’ instead of abortion, and by invoking a kind of 'right' of self-determination related to the child (expressed by refusing it through abortion if it is unwanted or to want it at any cost by means of the so-called 'medically assisted procreation' or 'surrogate motherhood' if instead it doesn’t arrive). The conviction that an unborn foetus isn’t a human being or a child but only a clump of cells, cancels the innate courage of each woman to accept a difficult and unexpected pregnancy. The experience of the Centres for the Support of Life and of those operating at the service of nascent life and mothers in difficulty proves, instead, that awareness of the human identity of the unborn foetus is the maximum factor in preventing abortion because it is an invitation share the problems, reawakening the mother’s innate courage and spontaneous love for her child. Consequently, public debate must be focussed on the human identity of the unborn, both by the strength of its arguments and its preventive efficacy capable of saving human lives, especially when abortion is privatized and made possible by taking chemical products at home (Ru486 and the so-called 'emergency contraception'). It is obvious that the defence of nascent life is entrusted primarily to the individual conscience but the conscience needs in some way to be ‘illuminated’.

2. Meditation on maternity and pregnancy. Compassion and acceptance for women who have had an abortion – often driven to do so by external circumstances and against their real nature and wishes – must be a solid point of reference. However, we cannot fail but recognize that the drive towards making abortion legal as a ‘right’ derives in the first instance from a certain kind of feminism that, after justly claiming equal dignity in regard to the male population, is now also crassly claiming equality in relation to the procreation of children, thus forgetting that it is exactly this exclusively female prerogative which gives a woman a natural privilege compared to a man, whose male and paternal figure is, however, valorised in the dimensional aspect of his responsibility and indispensable relational involvement. However, despite media representation, the culture that, in the name of the woman and her rights, is claiming the 'right to abortion' only unites a minority of women. Most women desire or achieve motherhood. Pregnancy, indispensable for human beings to be born and, therefore, for society to be able to exist and have a future, is characterized by three signs that symbolize the love of human life. In the first place, pregnancy always implicates a modification of the female body, often accompanied by discomfort and ending with the pain of birth. A woman accepts all of this with an instinctive courage. In the second place, the growth of the child in the mother’s womb ('duality in unity') can be interpreted as a prolonged embrace for many months. This embrace is a sign of love. For this reason, we have talked about a female privilege placed at the service of all of humanity. The third characteristic refers to the care of the other that pregnancy creates in a very special way between mother and child: we could say that the 'genie of relationship’, often attributed to the woman, finds its source in that primordial relational model established by the natural hospitality towards the child in the mother’s womb. On closer inspection, every authentic caring relationship (think about sick people, disabled people and the elderly) reverts to that free hospitality and self-giving that calls out to a woman when the child that lives within her announces its presence. Meditation on maternity and pregnancy indicates that the finishing line of the liberation movement is the uniquely feminine capacity to imprint on humanity the sign of love, which assumes, in turn, recognition of the unborn as a wonder of wonders, the result of creation in progress, an arrow of hope launched towards the future, one of us. It follows, therefore, that there is an urgent need for a new recognizable female presence that enables women to talk and be listened to in the name of their motherhood, realized or desired.

Below, in alphabetical order, the list of associations who have adhered to the Manifesto (in parentheses, the name of the president or of who signed on behalf of each reality).

Aigoc (Giuseppe Noia)

Alleanza cattolica (Marco Invernizzi)

Associazione Agata Smeralda (Mauro Barsi)

Associazione cattolica operatori sanitari (Fabrizio Celani)

Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (Giovanni Paolo Ramonda)

Associazione difendere la vita con Maria (Maurizio Gagliardini)

Associazione Donum Vitae (Paolo Marchionni)

Associazione Faes - Famiglia e scuola (Giovanni De Marchi)

Associazione Family day - Comitato difendiamo i nostri figli (Massimo Gandolfini)

Associazione Insieme per te (Vincenzo Saraceni)

Associazione italiana amici dei bambini-Aibi (Marco Griffini) Associazione italiana Ginecologi e Ostetrici cattolici –

Associazione italiana pastorale sanitaria (Giovanni Cervellera)

Associazione italiana psicologi e psichiatri cattolici (Tonino Cantelmi)

Associazione medici cattolici italiani (Filippo Boscia)

Associazione nazionale famiglie numerose (Mario Sberna)

Associazione nazionale San Paolo Italia (Giuseppe Dessì)

Associazione Patto Ethic Live (Italia Buttiglione)

Associazione Risveglio (Francesco Napolitano)

Associazione Scienza & Vita (Alberto Gambino)

Centro italiano femminile (Renata Natili Micheli)

Centro studi Livatino (Mauro Ronco)

Confederazione italiana Centri regolazione naturale fertilità (Giancarla Stevanella)

Confederazione nazionale Misericordie d’Italia (Roberto Trucchi)

Copercom - Coordinamento associazioni per la comunicazione (Massimiliano Padula)

Editrice Punto Famiglia (Giovanna Abbagnara)

Federazione europea medici cattolici (Vincenzo De Filippis) Fatebenefratelli - Ospedale San Giovanni Calibita (fra' Pascal Ahodegnon)

Fondazione Il cuore in una goccia - Difesa vita nascente e tutela salute materna e fetale (Anna Luisa La Teano, Angela Bozzo)

Fondazione Ut vitam habeant (Elio Sgreccia)

Forum sociosanitario (Aldo Bova)

Fraternità Arca di Nazareth(Fulvio Mannoia e Annamaria Barrile, coniugi)

Istituto scientifico internazionale Paolo VI su ricerca fertilità e infertilità umana - Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Alfredo Pontecorvi)

LiFE- Libertà Famiglia Educazione

Movimento cristiano lavoratori (Carlo Costalli)

Movimento Per - Politica etica responsabilità (Olimpia Tarzia)

Movimento per la Vita italiano (Marina Casini Bandini)

Noi Per (Gianni Silvestri)

Nuovi Orizzonti (Chiara Amirante)

Oeffe - Orientamento familiare (Giorgio Tarassi)

Ordine francescano secolare d’Italia (Paola Braggion)

Pro Vita (Toni Brandi)

Progetto Famiglia (Marco Giordano)

Rinnovamento nello Spirito Santo (Salvatore Martinez)

Scienziati e tecnologi per l’etica dello sviluppo (Pierfranco Ventura)

Semi di pace (Luca Bondi)

Sermig - Arsenale della pace (Ernesto Olivero)

Società italiana per la Bioetica e i Comitati etici (Francesco Bellino)

Unione farmacisti cattolici italiani (Piero Uroda)