

Social Justice

Q. What is the central Social Justice Issues of our Time?

A. Pope John Paul II says “If you want peace, work for Justice, if you want Justice, America defend life.” **The life issues are the central social justice issues of our time.**

Q. What is Justice?

A. Justice is the habit of giving to the other what is due or owed him – no more or less. (Virtue is a good habit, vice is a bad habit). Justice is primarily concerned with how I treat others not so much how others treat me. To be just is to give the other what, in effect, is already his. We are social beings and justice is the basis of all social life.

Q. What is Social Justice?

A. **Social Justice** embraces the problems of the human person, in relation to work economics, politics and international relations. It arose as the response of Leo XIII to the prevailing philosophies of economics and history of the last century and has been developed by successive popes to the present day.

Q. In Social Justice, who is central?

A. **The human person is central.** Work, the economy, politics and international relations are to be judged in so far as they are for the human person, for his development and fulfillment.

Q. How can we understand this distinction?

- A. Ask your self these questions:
- Is the Economy for the person or the person for the economy? The Economy is for the person.
 - Is politics for the person or the person for politics? Politics is for the person, and so on.

Dignity of the Human Person

Q. What do we mean by the dignity of the human person?

A. **The Dignity of the human person** rests on our being made by God in His image and likeness, both men and women. “God created man in His image. In the divine image He created him, male and female He created them.” Genesis 1:27

Q. Have some human beings more or less dignity than others?

A. The dignity possessed by all human beings is the same, irrespective of age, state or condition: it is the **intrinsic worth** of the person.

Q. Does everyone in our society believe this?

A. No. Our society, not knowing God, values the **Extrinsic worth** of the person, those who are able, fair, beautiful, clever, intelligent, educated, wealthy, etc. Those who fail this standard are not as valuable: the dark, poor, uneducated, handicapped, those with chronic mental or physical illness, mental deficiency, the imprisoned, the dying and all those who are a burden on society – primarily economic.

Q. Is human life sacred?

A. **Yes. Human life is sacred** from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death. Human life is created by God and only He may take life.



A brief Outline on

The Life Issues Social Justice Dignity of the Human Person



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The Life Issues

Q. What are the Life Issues?

A. The life issues are, in fact, **life and death issues**: with the legalization of killing in abortion and capital punishment and the current attempt to legalize killing in Euthanasia. With this is the tacit assumption that if it is legal to kill it must be morally acceptable to kill.

Q. Is killing always wrong?

A. The direct or willful killing of one human being by another is always wrong. There are no exceptions. However, in some circumstances killing is justifiable e.g. in self-defense.

Q. What is homicide?

A. **Homicide** is the direct or willful killing of another human being. It is always morally wrong. It is unlawful in all 50 states and since *Furman v. Georgia* (1972) is punishable by death. The total number of executions in the US since 1972 is 452. The state with the most executions is Texas. Total executions in 1977 were 74, in Texas 37.

Q. What is abortion?

A. **Abortion** is the direct or willful killing by a physician of a child in the womb (nascent human life) from the moment of conception to birth. It is always morally wrong. Since the *Roe v. Wade* 1973 decision abortion is legal in all 50 states. Abortion can be performed for any reason throughout the full 9 months of pregnancy. Since 1975 we have been killing 1.5 million babies per year; 50 million to date or one third of the next generation yearly. Contraceptives such as the pill and IUD are in fact abortifacient which brings the total to hundreds of millions. The total population is steadily falling and is now at replacement level. However, population figures show a large and growing aging population (the baby boomers) with a smaller young population which is the main reason social security is going broke. As a nation we are slowly committing suicide.

Q. What is infanticide?

A. **Infanticide** is the direct or willful killing of a child within one year of birth. It is always morally wrong. At present it is illegal.

Q. What is Suicide?

A. **Suicide** is killing oneself. The threat of suicide must always be taken with the utmost seriousness, and the person given help, even against their will. (Call parents, priest, and 911)

It is associated with serious mental illness and physical pain, which can be cured. It is also a major sin arising from despair or presumption. Suicide is no longer illegal. It is the eighth most common cause of death in all ages, the third most common in young people to 44 yr. Since the 1960's the suicide rate in young people has risen 300%.

Q. What is Euthanasia?

- A. **Euthanasia** means a quick and easy death. It is a euphemism for:
- **Physician assisted suicide**: The physician provides the means (drugs) for the old and dying or chronically ill patients to kill themselves.
 - **Physician Collusion** with parents in the death of a child who is handicapped, and has congenital mental and or physical dysfunction. It is often by neglect and is a form of infanticide. It is illegal but taking place.
 - **Physician directly killing** his patient with or without the patients consent.

End of Life Decisions: The following moral decisions arise for the physician, based on HIS intention and THE PATIENTS circumstances

- To Kill or let die
- To use ordinary or extraordinary means to treat his patient

Q. Distinguish Killing in Self-Defense from other forms of killing?

- A. **You may** defend your own life or the life of another from unlawful attack by taking equal and opposite action even to the point of killing the other. This is the **law of double effect**, where you **foresee** but do not **directly intend** the death of the other.

Q. Give some examples where this applies?

A. **Just War Theory**: Society may defend itself from **external** unlawful attack (eight criteria to be fulfilled).

Capital Punishment: A society through its legitimate Government, may defend itself from **internal** unlawful attack including Capital Punishment.

Development of Doctrine in capital punishment by John Paul II.

- In a modern society there is no need to kill the criminal to maintain public order and safety in society. Imprisonment will suffice.
- The criminal does not lose his human dignity however awful the crime committed.

Q. What about Vaccines grown on human cell lines?

A. **Many Vaccines are grown on fetal stem lines** the distinction is between formal cooperation with evil **vs.** material cooperation with evil. All formal cooperation with evil is illicit. However, while these are the only vaccines available, their use is morally allowable: as material cooperation with evil.