



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS **GENERAL AUDIENCE**

St Peter's Square

Wednesday, 10 October 2018

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today's catechesis is dedicated to the Fifth Word: *You shall not kill*. The fifth Commandment: *you shall not kill*. We are already in the second part of the Decalogue, the part which deals with relationships with our neighbour. And, with its concise and categorical formulation, this commandment rises up like a wall to defend the basic values of human relationships. And what is the basic value in human relationships?: the value of life. ^[1] Thus, *you shall not kill*.

One could say that all the evil carried out in the world can be summed up in this: contempt for life. Life is assailed by war, by organizations that exploit people — we read in newspapers or see in newscasts many facts — by speculations on creation and by the throwaway culture and by every system that subjugates human existence to calculated opportunities, while a scandalous number of people live in a state unworthy of mankind. This is having contempt for life, that is, in some way, killing.

A contradictory approach even permits the termination of human life in the maternal womb, in the name of safeguarding other rights. But how can an action that ends an innocent and defenceless life in its blossoming stage be therapeutic, civilized or simply human? I ask you: is it right to 'do away with' a human life in order to solve a problem? Is it right to hire a hit man in order to solve a problem? One cannot. It is not right to 'do away with' a human being, however small, in order to solve a problem. It is like hiring a hit man to solve a problem.

Where does all this come from? Violence and the rejection of life; where do they actually come from? From fear. Indeed, welcoming others is a challenge to individualism. Let us think, for example, about when it is discovered that a new life has a disability, even a serious one. In these tragic cases, parents need true closeness, true solidarity to face the reality and overcome the

understandable fears. However, they often receive hasty advice to interrupt the pregnancy, which is an expression: 'interrupting the pregnancy' means 'doing away with someone', directly.

A sick child is like any other needy person on earth, like an elderly person who needs assistance, like many poor people who struggle to get by. He or she who is seen as a problem is in reality a gift from God that can save me from egocentrism and help me to grow in love. Vulnerable life shows us the way out, the way to save ourselves from a life that withdraws into itself and to discover the joy of love. And here I would like to pause to thank, to thank the many volunteers, to thank Italy's strong volunteerism, the strongest I have ever known. Thank you.

And what leads man to reject life? It is the idols of this world: money — better to get rid of this one because it will be costly —, power, success. These are the wrong parameters for evaluating life. What is the only authentic measure of life? It is love, the love with which God loves it! The love with which God loves life: this is the measure. The love with which God loves all human life.

Indeed, what is the positive meaning of the Word "you shall not kill"? That God is a "*lover of life*", as we heard a short time ago in the Bible passage.

The secret of life is revealed to us by the way it was regarded by the Son of God who became man, to the point of assuming on the Cross rejection, weakness, poverty and suffering (cf. Jn 13:1). In every sick child, in every weak elderly person, in every desperate migrant, in every fragile and threatened life. Christ is seeking us (cf. Mt 25:34-46), he is seeking our heart, to open us up to the joy of love.

It is worthwhile to welcome every life because every man and woman is worth the blood of Christ himself (cf. 1 Pt 1:18-19). We cannot have contempt for what God has loved so much!

We must tell the men and women of the world: do not have contempt for life! The life of others, but also one's own life because the Commandment "thou shall not kill" applies to it too. Many young people should be told, "do not have contempt for your life. Stop rejecting God's work! You are a work of God! Do not underestimate yourself, do not despise yourself with the addictions that will ruin you and lead you to death!

May no one measure life according to the deceptions of this world, but instead may each one accept him or herself and others in the name of the Father who created us. He is a "*lover of life*": this is beautiful. "God is a lover of life". And we are all so dear to him that he sent his Son for us. In fact, the Gospel says: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son; that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

I greet all the English-speaking pilgrims taking part in today's Audience, particularly the groups from England, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Canada, Curaçao and the United States of America. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the joy and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you all!

I extend a special greeting to *young people, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds*. The month of October is dedicated to the missions and to praying the Holy Rosary. My dear friends, by praying the Rosary, you are invoking the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary on your every need and on the Church, so that she may be ever more holy and missionary, united in traveling the roads of the world and united in bringing Christ to everyone.

[1] Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction *Donum Vitae*, 5: aas 80 (1988), 76-77: "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves 'the creative action of God' and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being".
