



For a Christian response to
bioethical challenges

MARCH

**“We pray for Christians
facing new bioethical
challenges; may they
continue to defend the
dignity of all human life with
prayer and action”.**



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY FOR LIFE
FOR THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ACADEMY³

Francis

6 January 2019

10. We know that the threshold of basic respect for human life is being crossed, and brutally at that, not only by instances of individual conduct but also by the effects of societal choices and structures. Business strategies and the pace of technological growth now, as never before, condition biomedical research, educational priorities, investment decisions and the quality of interpersonal relationships. The possibility of directing economic development and scientific progress towards the covenant between man and woman, towards caring for our common humanity and towards the dignity of the human person, surely arises from a love for creation that faith helps us to deepen and illuminate. The prospect of a global bioethics, with a broad vision and a concern for the impact of the environment on life and health, offers a significant opportunity for strengthening the new covenant between the Gospel and creation.

12. Another area calling for study is that of the new technologies described as “emergent” and “convergent.” These include information and communication technologies, biotechnologies, nanotechnologies and robotics. Relying on results obtained from physics, genetics and neuroscience, as well as on increasingly powerful computing capabilities, profound interventions on living organisms are now possible. Even the human body is subject to interventions capable of modifying not only its functions and capabilities, but also its ways of relating on personal and societal levels, with the result that it is increasingly exposed to market forces. There is a pressing

³ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20190106_lettera-accademia-vita.html

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need, then, to understand these epochal changes and new frontiers in order to determine how to place them at the service of the human person, while respecting and promoting the intrinsic dignity of all. This task is extremely demanding, given its complexity and the unpredictability of future developments; consequently, it requires even greater discernment than usual. We can define this discernment as “a sincere work of conscience, in its effort to know the possible good on the basis of which to engage responsibly in the correct exercise of practical reason” (Synod of Bishops on Young People, *Final Document* [27 October 2018], 109). This process of research and evaluation thus entails the workings of the moral conscience and, for the believer, is part of his or her relationship with the Lord Jesus, in the desire to put on the mind of Christ in our actions and choices (cf. *Phil* 2:5).

1. May all those who believe in Christ and observe the moral laws proposed by the Church, achieve full communion with God and all brothers and sisters and, faced with the new bioethical challenges, promote the defence of life through prayer and social action. Let us pray... (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith)

ESORTAZIONE APOSTOLICA

EVANGELII GAUDIUM⁴

Francesco

24 November 2013

213. Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenceless and innocent among us. Nowadays efforts are made to deny them their human dignity and to do with them whatever one pleases, taking their lives and passing laws preventing anyone from standing in the way of this. Frequently, as a way of ridiculing the Church's effort to defend their lives, attempts are made to present her position as ideological, obscurantist and conservative. Yet this defence of unborn life is closely linked to the defence of each and every other human right. It involves the conviction that a human being is always sacred and inviolable, in any situation and at every stage of development. Human beings are ends in themselves and never a means of resolving other problems. Once this conviction disappears, so do solid and lasting foundations for the defence of human rights, which would always be subject to the passing whims of the powers that be. Reason alone is sufficient to recognize the inviolable value of each single human life, but if we also look at the issue from the standpoint of faith, “every violation of the personal dignity of the human being cries out in vengeance to God and is an offence against the creator of the individual”.^[176]

⁴ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html

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