The answers to the questions are edited by the theologian, Monsignor Costantino Di Bruno, Central Assistant of the Apostolic Movement.

The theme of the meeting: abortion and euthanasia

Q. If a woman is pregnant, at risk of life with her child, is it just to have an abortion in order to save herself?

In Christian morality the child must have priority over the mother and if the child can live the mother has to sacrifice her life for the child and not vice versa. So that the life you give you cannot take it away to preserve your life, you can give up your life so that the creature you carry in your womb can continue to live. This is the Christian morality because the mother is always a mother of life, she cannot be a mother of death. If you have to choose either you live or your son lives, you must choose to give your life for your child. God has made this choice, unable to die
himself he sent his son to die for all his children, in order to give them salvation. This is God's choice and it is the choice of every father and every mother, for parents need to be father and mother of life and not of death.

**Q. Respect for the dignity of the person. What is dignity?**

The dignity is born from the truth. What is the truth of every person? Being made in the image and likeness of God. If you bear the image of God in your heart this image must always be respected, if you lose your truth you lose your dignity. Today, there is a contradiction in the world, the animal is put on the same step of man, and this cannot go in any way because the animal is an animal and you respect it as an animal, you cannot respect it as a man; man comes before anything else because in creation everything was made for man, everything is at the service of man. Today this does not happen because we do not know who we are, we men have lost our dignity because we unhooked from God and unhooking yourself from the source you no longer know who you are. God gives you the dignity; however, now, you not only have the dignity of the image and likeness, but your dignity is above all that can be in creation because Christ made you son, daughter of the Father in him, and you have the dignity of a child of God. A dog is a creature, it cannot have this dignity, while you man share in the divine nature you are almost deified. This is the dignity of man that we must recognize because Christ has done this of us Christians. If we do not bring God back into our lives we do not even have man anymore and this is the tragedy of the man of today; not having God any more he lost contact with man. Tonight, I wish to invite you to do something so that God may be brought back into the hearts, and this is then the fruit that the Apostolic Movement has to produce, bringing God back into the hearts so that man find his dignity.

**Q. In case of rape of a woman for a possible pregnancy, can this make recourse to the morning after pill? The CCC says that whoever encourages or aids an abortion is guilty. Can doctors in these cases refuse?**

Before the refusal of the doctor you yourself have to be the one to refuse, because in case you do not find a consenting doctor you can always look for another one. The problem is serious. In the occurrence of a conception, in whatever way it happens, life was given to a being, and this life cannot be taken away any more because it no longer belongs to us. We can take care of it, we can give birth to it, we can educate it, we need to raise it, doing all the good we can; however, life no longer belongs to us. You have the power to conceive and that’s it, once you have conceived and it does not matter how, the creature you carry in your womb no longer belongs to you. When you conceived in whatever way you did, before marriage or after marriage, with passion and without passion, with violence or without violence, God gives you the soul; that is, God is subject even to your sin. Now if God infuses the soul at the time of conception: for the soul does not come from parents; that life no longer belongs to us, because it is his and we must
respect it. I have no right on the other either of life or of death. For this reason the Church is against abortion. And she is against all those forms that cause abortion in any way. The pill of the day before and the morning after pill cause the non birth of a child and the Church says that this is not allowed. There is no appeal to man or woman dignity that can oppress another dignity, for the reason that it does not belong to us and that life is not ours.

Q. With regard to euthanasia. Is it lawful to refuse forms of treatment that can prolong suffering in this life?

Euthanasia comes from the Greek and means beautiful death, sweet death. Euthanasia is a direct action of man to take a life that is ending, and we cannot actively intervene to take a life away. Pope John Paul II solves the problem in the "Gospel of life", when he speaks of an aggressive treatment that must be avoided. The aggression is when you see that by now your days are over and you want to live against all odds. In this case you must let life to have its course because death is part of life, and you cannot use an aggressive treatment to prolong your life for a couple of days. We had the example of Pope John Paul II when, in the last days of his earthly life, had a relapse; and before being taken to the hospital he asked if he still had a chance to live. The doctors told him that by now his day had come, and then the pope decided they did not have to do any more aggression on him, and that he would have received only routine care, because by now his time had come. But if there is a hope to live and you can still recover, your day has not come; then I cannot stop the treatment because I would cause death and I have no power over death. As I have no power over the infant life so I have no power over a dying life, which is not ours. We must help it as much as possible in its natural evolution.

Q. What is the dignity of the embryo in the vitro fertilization?

The problem is serious because the method is wrong. Medical science must help man, it cannot replace man. A son is a fruit not a product and if you make of a son a product you are no longer in the line of God, you are out. We must enter into the truth of the generation that must take place through an act of love between a man and a woman. The subsequent fertilization can then be helped, but this act cannot be replaced, because if this act comes to be replaced we have a product and not a fruit. Who cannot have children then what does he do? He accepts his human condition and entrusts it to the Lord in the grace of God and you know that the Lord, in His infinite mercy and in his blessing, can always intervene. However, the law of God must always be observed, because if we do not observe it we do something that is not in his holy provisions. But what does man say: "Science can, therefore it is lawful." Human power is not a sign of truth because God, who created man, gave his law to man: "God blessed them and said to the man and woman, grow, multiply and replenish the earth." In scripture, the power of conceiving is always a blessing of God and one must always ask the Lord for this blessing. The vice disturbs the natural process of life, it prevents the right fertilization. We must
be serious because life must be helped even before and not after, and many today are precluding themselves the way to be mothers and fathers in the right direction because they are ruining their bodies with their vices, and when you ruin a body what do you give then to others? A ruined body. We need to put much attention, all kind of caution, prudence and wisdom. This is what education is all about and not doing what you want, because nature has its own laws and we must respect them, if we do not respect them nature is against us.

Q. How should others behave if at a certain point an individual chooses of wanting to die?

Life does not belong to us, we are the custodians of our lives. Taking your life away is a desperation, it is sinning against the Lord. The Lord did not give us only life but he gave us the grace and truth. If we educate a person to live with grace and truth, with the grace you bear suffering and live it. When St. Paul went to complain to the Lord because he wanted to be freed from the spine which he bore, because he could not make it anymore, it was weighty, the Lord answered Paul: "Paul my grace is sufficient for you", and Paul came out of this meeting with God with a wonderful phrase: "When I am weak, it is then that I am strong", because the grace of God works in me, and if the grace of God did not act even if I were strong I would always be weak. We Christians have the tools of truth, of grace, of the word, of the prayer and of comfort. The Virgin Mary is at the foot of the cross and prays for her son, because she has to assist him. In the Hail Mary we recite, we ask her for assistance now and at the time of our death, we ask her for assistance because pain and suffering are hard for everyone; however, with the grace of God we can make it. We cannot live a Christian life without faith in the grace and truth. Then, live with grace, truth, believe and you will be able to bear the pain. But life does not belong to you, if you take it away you commit a suicide and if you force another to take it away from you, you simultaneously commit a murder and a suicide. Christ prepared himself to go onto the Cross, then it is necessary that every day we prepare ourselves to live our cross, it is necessary that we come into this global vision of faith.

Q. The juvenile court of Trent declared adoptable the child of a "poor" mother. The mother had clearly expressed the will of wanting to give birth and keep the child. Notwithstanding that for the Catholic faith the possibility of abortion is excluded, what should have the mother done, give it birth and then give it to the institutions depriving it of the maternal love; or lead a life of poverty and hardship for both?

The problem is not that of taking the child away from her, because this judgment is not fair, but that you must give the mother the chance of taking care of her child well. A civil society is civilized if it can help the world of suffering. The church is the church if she can help the world of suffering. We Christians are Christians if we can help this world. Taking a child away from a mother is an act of cruelty, it is an
inhumane act. This mother wanted to keep her baby, she wanted to be a true mother, however, she is poor. So the poor can no longer have children? Must to all the poor children be taken away? Or you have to make sure that there are no more poor? You have to give that necessary help, that subsidy, so that the mother and the child can grow up together; this is the so called Christian charity and this is also the so called civilization. A civilization is civilized not when it looks at the welfare of one but when it looks at the welfare of both and the welfare of the two is not separation, it is the union. The welfare of a child is that it lives with its mother and the welfare of a mother is that she lives with her baby. We must live charity, live subsidiarity, live the real social life, do those just laws that can help a mother in these conditions to be able to find a decent livelihood. This is the law of God. Today the laws of men do what they want: abortion by law is human, divorce by law is human; but not just because the human law says this the law of God approves and validates it. There are also unfair judgments and we as Christians have to say it. This sentence is iniquitous because the act is unjust: subtracting a little girl to the love and warmth of a mother. But if we are believers, if we are Christians, if we are civilized, we must help this mother. And if you, who want to adopt a child and love it so much, then adopt it in the house where the child lives, because loving means giving something the other and not taking anything away. Taking away is not loving, it is selfishness. On the contrary, giving is loving.

**Q. In the event that the person discovers he has a terminal illness can he choose to stop treatments that can only postpone death a few months, however, causing great pain and suffering, or he must necessarily bear the treatment?**

You can use whatever can relieve your pain, you are not condemned to suffer at any cost, and if human science can help you feel your pain less, to make you live it with dignity, you can serve yourself of it, even because you do not know the limit of endurance of your pain, and you could even arrive to the point of desperation. You can serve yourself of all those scientific findings that help you live your suffering well, to live your illness well and to prepare your death well. Death must be prepared and prepared well.

**Q. With regard to organ donation. Some people choose to give their body after death to science to conduct experiments. Is it lawful to conduct experiments on fetuses conceived in early days of life? How about the case of dead fetuses?**

Let us distinguish between what is a dead and a living body. The living body does not belong to you and you cannot carry out experiments, you cannot conceive to conduct experiments, because this is damaging to the dignity of the person that already exists from the moment of conception. With regard to organ donations when you are dead you can give your organs, there is no limitation; restriction arises when you are in life. You cannot give a part of your body if it brings you an
evil greater than the benefit you bring to your brother. You shall not procure yourself a greater evil than you want to solve. Your life is equal in dignity to that of the other and you have a particular, singular vocation, because God created you for a purpose that you must fulfill. The aim of every person is so high that you cannot kill a person to experiment because we are dealing with a human person. But if you start from the faith of the Church you get a result, if you start from the need of a man you get another result. Science says what I can do, because I can do it scientifically; but if you go against the dignity of the person you have to abstain. Science can always work as long as it has the respect for the human person, for you cannot destroy a person.

Q. What does the Church think of stem cells extracted from umbilical cords?

You do not come to harm any dignity here, science can act as it wills according to what are its ways and possibilities, because there is no violation of the human being. It can act as it wishes, provided that there is always a good, holy, honest, just end of charity and salvation.

Q. In the event that there is a person who has been declared clinically dead and is kept alive only by some machines that help him breath or eat. Why is not this case considered aggressive therapy?

For a person to be declared dead these things are not enough. In the Church we have a beautiful expression to define the death of a person: he expired, that is the soul left his body, because if the soul does not leave the body the person is not dead. Jesus Christ bowed his head and expired his spirit, he died. If we do not start from this certainty that until the soul is in the body man is living, you can do what you want for a machine can always declare you dead, but you are not dead, you are living; and, if you're living, I must treat you as a living being and I must give you what is possible for you to continue living. When you will naturally expire your soul, you will go into eternity. But until then I have to always cooperate to your life and not to your death; and I must do this at any time, in everything, in every moment. Life must be protected, must be cured, must be guarded from the moment of conception until its natural death.

Indications for the preparation of the meeting given by Monsignor Costantino Di Bruno:

- Catechism of the Catholic Church from nn. 2366-2379


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