

LEAP OF FAITH

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Bush's Sanctity-of-Life Proclamation

Special Day Announced

WASHINGTON, D.C., JAN. 20, 2002 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is the text of a proclamation by President George W. Bush for National Sanctity of Human Life Day 2002. The event was marked today.

National Sanctity of Human Life Day, 2002

By the President of the United States of America a Proclamation

This Nation was founded upon the belief that every human being is endowed by our Creator with certain "unalienable rights." Chief among them is the right to life itself. The Signers of the Declaration of Independence pledged their own lives, fortunes, and honor to guarantee inalienable rights for all of the new country's citizens. These visionaries recognized that an essential human dignity attached to all persons by virtue of their very existence and not just to the strong, the independent, or the healthy. That value should apply to every American, including the elderly and the unprotected, the weak and the infirm, and even to the unwanted.

Thomas Jefferson wrote that, "[t]he care of human life and happiness and not their destruction is the first and only legitimate object of good government." President Jefferson was right. Life is an inalienable right, understood as given to each of us by our Creator.

President Jefferson's timeless principle obligates us to pursue a civil society that will democratically embrace its essential moral duties, including defending the elderly, strengthening the weak, protecting the defenseless, feeding the hungry, and caring for children -- born and unborn. Mindful of these and other obligations, we should join together in pursuit of a more compassionate society, rejecting the notion that some lives are less worthy of protection than others, whether because of age or illness, social circumstance or economic condition. Consistent with the core principles about which Thomas Jefferson wrote, and to which the Founders subscribed, we should peacefully commit ourselves to seeking a society that values life -- from its very beginnings to its natural end. Unborn children

should be welcomed in life and protected in law.

On September 11, we saw clearly that evil exists in this world, and that it does not value life. The terrible events of that fateful day have given us, as a Nation, a greater understanding about the value and wonder of life. Every innocent life taken that day was the most important person on earth to somebody; and every death extinguished a world. Now we are engaged in a fight against evil and tyranny to preserve and protect life. In so doing, we are standing again for those core principles upon which our Nation was founded.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Sunday, January 20, 2002, as National Sanctity of Human Life Day. I call upon all Americans to reflect upon the sanctity of human life. Let us recognize the day with appropriate ceremonies in our homes and places of worship, rededicate ourselves to compassionate service on behalf of the weak and defenseless, and reaffirm our commitment to respect the life and dignity of every human being.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-sixth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

[Text released by White House]
Obtained from www.zenit.org

Together in His Name

1-22 and 9-11

By **BISHOP JOSEPH A. FIORENZA**

The terrorists attack on the United States last September killed around 3000 people. The destruction of the World Trade Center and the damage to the Pentagon was unbelievably devastating and the enormous effects are so far reaching that countless number of people continue to be its victims in one way or another. Our nation will never forget the cruel and horrific tragedy which is referred to as 9-11, that fateful day which, it seems, changed everything.

There was another fateful day which continues to cause untold harm in this country, 1-22, the January day in 1973 when the Supreme Court legalized abortion. Since that day millions of unborn babies have been killed with the protection of the law. This willingness to allow abortion without legal protest ushered into our national life a generalized disrespect for life and human dignity. The result is a "culture of death" which insults God's gift of life and His absolute dominion over life from conception to natural death.

9-11 was a horrible and despicable tragedy, but 1-22 also was a national tragedy of gigantic proportions which causes great havoc in human lives.

In the wake of 1-22, only 29 years ago, we have witnessed a loss of respect for human life by increased violence in homes and on the streets, growing support for assisted suicide and now research on human embryos. This is not surprising because since it is lawful and acceptable to destroy unborn human life, human life is like a cheap commodity which can be disregarded and violated with impunity at any stage of existence. In a culture of death, life is not valued and human dignity is ignored. Then it becomes easy for a society to accept other affronts to human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, lack of decent health care, horrible working conditions, disgraceful criminal judicial systems and capital punishment. 1-22 was focused on the legality of abortions but it opened the floodgates to wholesale attacks on the invaluable dignity of the human person.

Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul, has asked us to respond to the culture of death "by a general mobilization of consciences and a united effort to activate a great campaign in support of life."

In their "Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities," the U.S. Bishops have called "for individual Catholics and the many institutions and organizations of the Church to unite in an unprecedented effort to restore respect and legal protection for every human life - to be what the Holy Father asks us to be: a people of life and a people for life. It is our hope and expectation that in focusing on the need to respect and protect the lives of the innocent unborn and those who are disabled, ill

or dying, we will help to deepen respect for the life of every human being."

The defense of the dignity of human life embraces a number of important pro-life issues. While each issue has its own distinctive character, all of them are linked to the dignity of human life created in the image of God. The moral teaching of the Church is framed in a vision of the value and worth of each human life, called a "consistent ethic of life," in which abortion, euthanasia and the deliberate destruction of human embryos for stem-cell research, are central issues. The U.S. Bishops have insisted that "to focus on the evil of deliberate killing in abortion and euthanasia is not to ignore the many urgent conditions that demean human dignity and threaten human rights." The pro-life fight against abortion does not excuse indifference or inaction to other pro-life issues, such as decent affordable housing, available health care and opposition to capital punishment.

The Pope's call for " a great campaign in support of life" led to a revised "Pastoral Plan for Pro-life Activities" which the Bishops issued last November. The new pastoral plan has four major strategies: Public information and education on the humanity of unborn children and the moral evil of euthanasia; pastoral care (post abortion counseling, care for disabled and dying, and those sentenced to death); public policy efforts to reverse the Supreme Court's 1973 ruling on abortion, and opposition to assisted suicide; prayer that the culture of death will be replaced by a culture of life and love.

Every January we are reminded that 1-22 was a day in which our beloved nation began a slow but steady slide into a culture of death. It can be reversed. On 1-22 this year, Masses celebrated in every parish should be offered that the United States will resist any efforts to continue the death culture and give legal protection to all human life. Persistent prayer will help to change the hearts of fellow citizens from pro-abortion to pro-life, from approving death to supporting life.

The U.S. Bishops emphasized the necessity of prayer: "Prayer is the foundation of all that we do in defense of human life. Our efforts - whether educational, pastoral or legislative - will be less than fully fruitful if we do not change hearts and if we do not overcome our own spiritual blindness. Only with prayer - prayer that storms heaven for justice and mercy - prayer that cleanses our hearts and souls - will the culture of death that surrounds us today be replaced with a culture of life."

We pray for the day when the high court's disastrous decision of 1-22 will be reversed because our nation cherishes human life more than it supports death. Until then, 1-22 will be remembered as a day of national tragedy. †

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