

Life-Giving Waters: A Defense of the Sanctity of Life

Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12

Water That Brings Life

Ezekiel's vision is stunning. From the Temple flows a river that starts as a mere trickle but becomes a powerful stream, bringing life to barren landscapes and even healing the Dead Sea. Wherever this water flows, life flourishes.

St. Augustine explains that this water symbolizes God's grace flowing through the sacraments, especially Baptism. The Fathers of the Church consistently taught that God's grace is meant for everyone, without exception—no matter their weakness, vulnerability, or perceived insignificance.

But what moral truth is being illustrated here? It is the fundamental principle of the **Sanctity of Life**. Just as the water in Ezekiel's vision touches even the most desolate places and brings life, God's grace affirms the dignity and worth of every human life, regardless of age, condition, or utility.

The Sanctity of Life: A Principle Under Attack

Ezekiel's vision proclaims: *"Wherever the river goes, every living creature which swarms will live"* (Ezekiel 47:9). In other words, life is valued wherever it exists. But our modern culture increasingly ignores this truth.

The **sanctity of life** is under attack in multiple areas:

1. Abortion

In 2020, the *Guttmacher Institute* reported that there were over **930,000 abortions in the United States** alone (Guttmacher Institute, "Abortion Incidence and Service Availability in the United States, 2020," 2022). Many of these decisions are made based on convenience, fear, or societal pressure.

St. Teresa of Calcutta courageously stated: *"It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish."* (Speech at the National Prayer Breakfast, 1994).

The Church, from its earliest days, has condemned the deliberate killing of the unborn. **The Didache**, one of the earliest Christian writings, declares: *"You shall not murder a child by abortion nor kill that which is begotten"* (Didache 2:2).

2. Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

In countries like **Canada and the Netherlands**, assisted suicide and euthanasia have expanded rapidly. In Canada, *Sophia*, a woman suffering from chemical sensitivities, applied for euthanasia because her suffering from inadequate housing was deemed intolerable. Instead of providing compassionate care, society offered her death as a solution

(CBC News, “Woman Who Sought Euthanasia Over Lack of Housing Dies in Hospital,” December 2022).

St. John Paul II warned about this mentality in *Evangelium Vitae*: “*The culture of death seeks to establish itself by claiming to respond to human suffering and appealing to a sense of compassion*” (*Evangelium Vitae*, no. 15).

True compassion means offering care, presence, and dignity, not death as a shortcut. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* affirms: “*Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable*” (CCC 2277).

3. Neglect of the Elderly and Disabled

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the elderly were disproportionately affected and, in some places, even denied medical care due to their age or condition. Such a utilitarian approach disregards their dignity and inherent worth.

Ezekiel’s vision reminds us that God’s grace reaches out to the weakest and most vulnerable. As Pope Francis has said: “*Even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God’s creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever*” (*Message to the 2014 Day for Life*).

Justification Through Real-Life Events

Let’s look at a real-life example of the sanctity of life defended and affirmed:

The Story of Nick Vujicic

Born without arms and legs, **Nick Vujicic** faced tremendous challenges and bullying as a child. By the world's standards, his life could have been dismissed as less valuable or worth living. Yet, through faith and perseverance, Nick now travels the world as a motivational speaker and Christian evangelist, spreading hope and the message of Christ.

What if society had dismissed his life as “unproductive” or “too burdensome”? What if he had been offered assisted suicide as a “solution” to his struggles? Instead, the grace of God has transformed his life into a powerful witness of hope and dignity. His life reminds us of the words of **St. John Chrysostom**: “*Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person.*”

Applying the Vision of Ezekiel

Ezekiel’s vision challenges us to allow the life-giving waters of God’s grace to reach every corner of our society—especially those places we have deemed “dead” or “unworthy.” As Catholics, we are called to defend life, whether it is threatened by **abortion, euthanasia, neglect, or violence**.

The truth is, **every human life is a masterpiece of God's creation**. St. John Paul II urged us to be "*a people of life and for life*" (*Evangelium Vitae*, no. 6).

Let the Waters Flow

Ezekiel's river brought life to the Dead Sea—one of the most inhospitable places on Earth. Today, God calls us to be instruments of His life-giving water, bringing dignity, hope, and love to all, especially the most vulnerable.

We must ask ourselves: *Are we allowing the waters of grace to flow through us?* Are we standing for the sanctity of life in a culture that increasingly rejects it?

Let us defend life courageously and joyfully, letting God's grace bring life where the world has only brought death.