



Evangelium Vitae: The Gospel of Life

John Paul II

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The Gospel of life is at the heart of Jesus message. Lovingly received day by the Church, it is to be preached with dauntless fidelity as good news to the people of every age and culture.

Evangelium Vitae: The Gospel of Life Details

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verbava says

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Rosesforroses says

Problem is not the quality of writing - which is fine - but bankrupt morals which advocate torture and murder because "God told me to". People have died in agony because the Catholic church teaches that euthanasia and abortion are always forbidden. These people are not statistics but human beings and I can't give more stars to this book, writing notwithstanding.

Kelli says

John Paul II can be a little hard to read at times, but I found that he repeats himself often making it easier to ultimately understand a concept. In this encyclical, he spends a lot of time defending and defining the intrinsic value of human life and rights. He further explains the atrocity of abortion and euthanasia, promoting what changes society needs to make in order for life at these stages to be fully respected. He mentions war and the death penalty, although I wish he would have spent more time on these topics. In one of the final sections, as he encourages the genius of women, there are little winks to his later Letter to Women, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Foreign Grid says

gives standing ovation

Person: Why are you applauding at your screen?

Tommy says

Who am I to judge an encyclical ?

This said, I found some parts excellent, and really prophetic and lucid.

Some other parts, especially the last part, seemed to suffer from a "spirit of vatican II syndrom" with an argumentation that stays locked in immanence. Typically, as in many magisterial writing of the last 50 years, it seems to me that there is a lack of a good sense of a strong theology of a proper relationship (as traditionnally understood, by catholics) between religion and politics (kingship of Christ, a sense of duty toward God and not only toward fellow citizens, etc, ...)

Without expliciting why, ... I have the impression that those problems lead to a tendancy to a kind of pelagianism or activism.

In the first century of christianity, Christians, or Saint Benedict, did not try to change society. They simply tried to be faithful to Christ. To set a goal, as worthy as it can be (ecology, the "gospel of life", etc, ...) appart from that is good, but always should be ordered UNDER the first duty, which is to worship God. Social change comes then as a "secondary benefit" of that first aim.

Also, Saint John Paul II seems to argue that capital punishment is intrinsically evil, which contradict centuries of the church tradition.

Rowena says

it talks about the Catholic view on life and the disruption of life: abortion, contraception, euthanasia, death sentence. The book managed to give a sense why Catholic forbids them.

Andy says

If you want to get an idea of how to be truly and completely pro-life, read this. It is firm in its teaching of what is not allowed (abortion & euthanasia mainly), but it goes beyond that. JP II lays out that the foundation of being for life is about changing our entire outlook. He speaks about changing our day to day life with our family, friends, strangers, and all society.

To support life is more than just to be against things; it is a call to actively live for things. The last quarter of the encyclical is where he makes his points on this. He addresses parents, social workers, the media, healthcare workers, women, and more directly with thoughts on how they can approach a culture of life.

If you consider yourself pro-life, you should read this to reassess how your life matches with truth.

(Example, being against abortion but then not being willing to help teenage mothers is not enough.)

If you do not consider yourself pro-life, this will give you a good understanding of what being pro-life actually means. I expect most people in this category will find themselves pleasantly surprised by what they read.

I will say that while JP II calls out the ability and need to scientifically and logically defend and promote the Church's teachings on life, he does not do so here. I wouldn't expect a person who supports abortion and isn't religious to change their views because of this, but I still think it's worth the read.

Ryan Moore says

There are few books in my life that I can honestly say have fundamentally changed the way I think about a subject. This is one of those books. My view on the sanctity of life was rocked by this JP2 encyclical.

Colleen says

I bought this book by Pope JP2 about a decade ago. Although I picked it up once in awhile I never read more than a page or two and never with any real interest. I think I had just finished listening to an audiotape reading of the New Testament. I bought it not so much for the title but because I wanted to understand the allure of John Paul II.

John says

This document is required reading for those who want to understand the Catholic Church's teaching on human life. Pope John Paul II reiterates his predecessors' condemnation of abortion and euthanasia and questions the necessity of capital punishment in modern society. He also examines the prevalence of abortion in democratic societies and analyzes why people sometimes end up diminishing the value of life in the name of liberty.

I was particularly interested in the section on defending life in the political square, especially in an election year. He provides a lot of food for thought.

I feel a little strange giving this four stars instead of five, but for such a long encyclical, this is not very well organized. The Pope exhibits his usual flair for examining issues in a general fashion, then swooping in to examine each in detail, and then returning to abstract principles. For some encyclicals (e.g., *Fides et Ratio*), this works well, but not here. As I am using excerpts of this for a class I'm teaching, I ended up going back through the document and arranging all the paragraphs on abortion together, even though they're scattered across the encyclical.

Robert Federline says

One of the hallmarks of intelligence is to be able to take a complex subject, and render your opinions in a manner that makes it readily accessible to people of any level of intelligence or understanding. Using this standard, Pope John Paul II proves, in this important work, that he is a man of high intelligence. This encyclical sets forth in clear and very concise language a defense of life, at any of its stages, with powerful arguments. Notwithstanding the fact that it is written by the head of a church and, therefore, makes abundant use of citations to biblical and other religious sources, the logic of this writing easily withstands scrutiny and contrary arguments on the basis of its logic alone.

It is highly unlikely that any proponents of the culture of death, otherwise known as pro-abortionists, or

assisted suicide proponents, etc., have ever read this work, nor considered in depth and detail the positions which it takes.

This is an extremely worthwhile read for anyone who is even tangentially interested in the issues of life, whether from the time of conception, or end of life stages, or considering the morality and justice of the death penalty.

Thomas Curry says

Brief and sweet, *Evangelium Vitae* offers a summary of the Church's teaching on issues of life. Special attention it provided to abortion and euthanasia. The letter is somehow simultaneously riveting and dry; definitely not a letter to be read for pure enjoyment. Regardless, the information is good and intellectually stimulating.

Dcn. Jedidiah Tritle says

The language--at least the English translation--is surprisingly nebulous, especially compared to JP II's other works such as *Fides et Ratio*. That being said, if you can get past the fluffy "modern man does this and that" language, the content of this piece is exceptional. There's even a solemn declaration!

Brent says

This can be a challenging book to read, as the late, great Pope John Paul II wrote some pretty thought-provoking material, and I couldn't read too many pages at once without stopping to consider what I had read. At the same time, it is accessible writing and quite thrilling to read the thoughts and teachings of JP II. I can't really do full justice or sum up the entire book, but would like to make a few points about the book:

1. It is an encyclical, a document primarily meant to be circulated to the bishops. However, now these writings are also available as books and electronically on various websites, including http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/joh... I find it very heartening that the encyclical letter is addressed not only to bishops and those in religious life, but to Catholic lay people and to "all people of good will on the value and inviolability of human life".
 2. While it was apparently used in 1993 after the World Youth Day in Denver, the term "culture of death" is really a big part of the theme of this encyclical.
 3. If you're not sure if you can read this entire document as a book or on-line, do yourself a favor and read the introduction and the stunning first chapter, which uses the story of Cain and Abel to develop the theme of the book.
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Kevin says

If you want to understand the Catholic Church's stance on abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, etc., and how those doctrine's relate back to the teachings of the New Testament, this is a good, concise source. Be advised this is an encyclical, and so comes across necessarily as academic.

