



If someone called you right now and told you there was an elephant standing outside of the room that you are in, you may very well think they are crazy. It is possible you live in a location where the prospect of there being an elephant outside of your door is highly unlikely. Still, this person presses the issue – he asserts that there is, in fact, an elephant outside of your room. When you disagree, he says, “Well, it is just your opinion that there is no elephant. You are inclined to your opinion.”

If you thought your friend was crazy before, you definitely think so, now. You know that, in this circumstance, there is an objective truth. You can walk outside and definitely see that an elephant is or is not there. Either you or your friend is wrong; you both can't be right in this situation.

When we speak about the dignity of life and ask questions about what a person is worth, when life starts, and whether or not abortion should be legal, we are dealing with objective truth. The very foundation from which the Church asserts that abortion is a grave evil isn't

open to varying opinions. To say, “Well, we can agree to disagree. Both of us can be right, in this situation,” isn’t an option. We aren’t talking about preference of pizza toppings or favorite sports teams. Here is why:

The Church believes that human life begins at the moment of conception and is sacred from this beginning (CCC 2258). Each human person, present at the moment of conception, is made in the image and likeness of God. At the moment of conception, that person is endowed with dignity that cannot be diminished or stripped away (CCC 2270, 2273). As Catholics, we wholeheartedly believe and know that human life exists at the moment of conception. This belief is rooted in Sacred Scripture and the Tradition of the Church, and is increasingly backed up by the scientific understanding of human life. Even for a person that doesn’t believe in God, the presence of newly emerging science regarding human life and the negative impact abortion has on women cannot be ignored. Whether you are Christian or not, an atheist or believer, the arguments against abortion are backed up by solid logic and scientific realities.

### **Scripture and Tradition**

In Sacred Scripture, God creates men and women in His image and likeness (*Genesis 1:26-28*). One of the commandments that God gives to Moses prohibits murder, especially the murder of the innocent (*Exodus 23:7*). God tells the

prophet Jeremiah that before he was formed in the womb, God knew him (*Jeremiah 1:5*). Jesus continually blesses the weak and vulnerable, especially children (*Matthew 19:4*).

Understanding this is foundational in understanding the Church’s teaching on the dignity of life. Consider this: If human life begins at the moment of conception, then any termination of that life is wrong, because the termination of human life is murder. Humanity, through the laws that we have enacted throughout history, has affirmed the grave evil that murder is (especially the murder of someone innocent).

The Catholic Church teaches, “human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception” (CCC 2270). This has been the teaching of the Church since as early as the first century, and this teaching is unchangeable (CCC 2271). It is unchangeable because truth cannot change – a life is a life.

### **Scientific Study**

Continued scientific study affirms this reality, that from the moment of conception human life is present. Everything is present that a human life requires to grow and develop – all that is needed is time. Nothing is different genetically other than time to grow and develop. If left unhindered, a new fertilized egg will be born as a fully developed human. The following is

an excerpt from a textbook speaking about the moment of conception:

*“Human life begins at fertilization, the process during which a male gamete or sperm unites with a female gamete or oocyte (ovum) to form a single cell called a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marked the beginning of each of us as a unique individual.”...“A zygote is the beginning of a new human being (i.e., an embryo).”<sup>1</sup>*

As a society, we have an obligation to uphold what natural law gives us, moral law demands of us, and scientific study is continually affirming. Any law that deprives a human person of their right to life, regardless of age, health, or ability to support one’s self, the Church will staunchly oppose (CCC 2273). We have an obligation to oppose these laws, as well.



## WHY DEFEND LIFE?

A common response to the defense of life is that we do not have the right to tell someone else what to do. If you are a male reading this, you will hear this argument far more often. Consider that the only time we hear this statement given when we are talking about abortion.

A person can and should speak out against racism and oppression, even if that person is not of the race or people being oppressed. In fact, that person has a greater responsibility to speak out on behalf of their brothers and sisters experiencing persecution.

We would not criticize a bystander that steps in to stop an attempted murder; we would praise that person for their defense of life.

This is true of abortion. We cannot stand by because we are afraid or because someone says we have no voice. We are called to be a voice of the voiceless; we have a great responsibility to be this voice. We would never stand by idly while a group of people was massacred if we had the means to stop it. It would be irresponsible.

<sup>1</sup> Keith L. Moore, *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology*, 7th edition. Philadelphia, PA: Saunders, 2003, pp. 16, 2.

Since the United States legalized abortion in 1973, over 57 million children have been killed by abortion. Let that number sink in. In 2015, the population of New York City in the United States was just over eight million. That means, in the United States alone, a population seven times the size of New York has been lost.

Abortion is not fair to the children that become victims of it, and it is not fair to the mothers that believe they have no other choice. Both of these groups need to be supported. We must work to lobby politicians to change unjust abortion laws, we must work to support social services to provide mothers with crisis pregnancy services that provide options other than abortion, and we must engage in discussions and arguments that help change minds and hearts.

This small pocket guide contains the material to help you engage in those arguments. In the following section, you will find nine arguments that a pro-abortion advocate may make. On the surface, they may sound convincing - but they are easy to dismantle. Remember - there is a truth. We cannot all be correct, especially if one person says, "Well, you can believe that life begins at one time and I can believe it begins at another." Life is too important for this kind of ridiculous debate. We have a duty to bring the truth of the dignity of human life from the very beginning to our world and save those among us that are the most vulnerable.

Before we begin, it is vital to note that the pro-life position of the Catholic Church expands far beyond the issue of abortion. The Church defends and upholds life in all stages, continually affirms and works to uphold the dignity of the poor, and opposes the death penalty in all but the most rare and dangerous of circumstances. This particular book is going to focus on abortion, but if we are going to consider ourselves pro-life we must remember that it encompasses many issues, not simply this one. Much of what you read here can be applied to many other life issues easily, and more information about the Church's teaching on life issues can be easily found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which you can access, online through [uscceb.org](http://uscceb.org).