

Always, “Life is Worth Living”: Confronting the Culture of Death with Saint John Paul II’s “Gospel of Life” - Rev. Martin Ifeanyi Onuoha

In 1920, when two German professors, Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche, conceived the idea of ‘Life unworthy of life’ (in their *Allowing the Destruction of Life Unworthy of Life*), no one would have imagined the impending annihilation that lurked. Their book was the precursor of a 1942 propaganda film (*Dasein ohne Leben – Psychiatrie und Menschlichkeit* [Existence Without Life – Psychiatry and Humanity]) which, by distinguishing Existence from Living, openly advocated what had been Nazi practice even before the war. The phrase and idea subsequently became foundational to the Nazi designation of some fragments of the society – mainly people with birth defects, epilepsy, alcoholism, vision loss, hearing loss, mental illnesses, personality disorders, developmental delays and even those who suffered from certain orthopedic problems - as not worthy of life, leading to mass exterminations. From the granting of a petition to kill one severely disabled child, this spiralled into what became known as *mercy killing* or *euthanasia*. Thus, ‘life unworthy of life’ theory was progressively implemented first through coercive sterilization, the killing of “impaired” children in hospitals, the killing of “impaired” adults, and then it was eventually extended unimpeded to “impaired” inmates of concentration and extermination camps and, finally, to mass killings’ in advancement of such bigoted ends as the institutionalisation of racial supremacy. This was surreptitiously executed. Hitler’s own chief medical officer said that this would be implemented ‘more smoothly and rapidly in time of war’ since, ‘in the general upheaval of war, the open resistance anticipated from the church would not play the part it might in other circumstances’. (R. N. Proctor, “Culling the German Volk”). One wonders whether there would not have been the temptation to infer some analogy had the attempt to push through the Assisted Dying Bill in the United Kingdom and in Ireland in the midst of the pandemic been successful. Of course, such comparison would be preposterous. Yet it is important to be conscious that we could, once again, be up against the same phrase - ‘unworthy of life’ - with its ‘moral’ claim that human life is only valuable if it is of a certain quality and its political sense that the state may allow some officials to decide a level of life below which deliberate termination is lawful.

Indeed, we are a long way from the horrors of Nazi Germany and all of those who now strongly support euthanasia would be understandably and rightly appalled if their reasoning or motives were compared with those of that time. Neither Binding nor Hoche nor, of course, any Nazi, did or could rightfully claim to be motivated by compassion but the biggest single argument used nowadays for euthanasia is compassion and it is justified under the umbrella of individual choice. However, whether we have a right to terminate the lives of those who ask for it and whether those who ask for euthanasia have a right so to do cannot be decided on the basis solely of compassion but on the very nature of human life itself. Here we need to use the reason given to us by God to understand both this basic moral question and to determine the probable long-term consequences of legalising euthanasia.

Manifestly, euthanasia in any form discards any notion that life is something received, and that human life has a sacred value in itself. Such concepts are not unique to Christianity. However, the most tenacious and perspicuous defence of the two principles of life as a gift and as sacred was made by Pope John Paul II, both in his writings and in his personal witness of enduring a prolonged ill health and pain till life’s natural end. He insisted that “Human life is sacred because, from its beginning, it involves ‘the creative action of God’, and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end”. Therefore, “God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being”. (*Evangelium Vitae*, No. 53; *Donum Vitae* No.5; *Gen* 9:6) This is decreed by God himself: “For your own lifeblood, too, I will demand an accounting and from man in regard to his fellow man I will demand an accounting for human life”. (*Gen*. 9:5; *EV*. 39) Consequently, life possesses a sacredness which gives rise to its inviolability, written from the beginning in man’s heart, in his conscience. (*EV*. 40) These principles need to be upheld and made intelligible to the world at large. The arguments of those advocating euthanasia, however well-intended they seem, need to be examined and contested clearly. **To be continued.....**

Newsletter for the Parishes of Our Lady and the Apostles, St. Ambrose and St. Vincent de Paul

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 Deacon: **Rev. Moses Ibeh**

28th November 2021 THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

You can join us via this Live Stream link: <https://www.churchservices.tv/ourladystockport> (for Our Lady’s church)
 OR click on tinyurl.com/stockportparishes or [Stockport Parishes - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) (for both St. Vincent’s and St. Ambrose’)

IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES, WE ASK THAT YOU PLEASE SIGN IN AT THE DOOR FOR TRACK AND TRACE USING THE QR CODE OR PAPER, THOUGH NOT REQUIRED BY LAW, WE STILL PLEAD THAT YOU WEAR A FACE COVERING, AND GIVE PEOPLE SOME SPACE UNTIL THE PANDEMIC IS OVER.



Date	Feast	Time	Church	Mass Intention
Sun 28th Nov	The First Sunday of Advent	5.30pm 7.00pm 9.30am 11.00am	Vigil Mass Sat. St Ambrose Vigil Mass Sat. Our Lady’s St Vincent’s Our Lady’s	Our Parish Family Our Parish Family Our Parish Family Maurice Higgins RIP Ann
Mon 29th Nov	Ferial	9.30am	St. Ambrose	Catherine Sinicola—RIP
Tues 30th Nov	St Andrew, Ap	9.30am	Our Lady’s	Bernard Reilly—RIP
Wed 1st Dec	Ferial	9.30am	St. Vincent’s	Rosalee Hankinson—RIP
Thurs 2nd Dec	Ferial	9.30am 7.00pm	St Ambrose Our Lady’s-	For the Holy Souls Michael & Mary Murray
Fri 3rd Dec	St Francis Xavier, P. Day of special prayer for all migrants and refugees	9.30am	St. Vincent’s	Michael Smith—RIP
Sat 4th Dec	Ferial (St John of Damascus, P, D.)	9.30am	Our Lady’s	Maureen Barris RIP
Sun 5th Dec	The Second Sunday of Advent.	5.30pm 7.00pm 9.30am 11.00am 2.30pm	Vigil Mass Sat. St Ambrose Vigil Mass Sat. Our Lady’s St Vincent’s Our Lady’s Baptism—OLATA	Our Parish Family Paula & Agnes Kiely –RIP Our Parish Family Andrew Callaghan—ANN Bobbie & Aria Lonsdale

There is **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** every weekday morning before Mass from 8:30am to 9:30am.

The **Sacrament of Reconciliation** is available after 9.30am Mass on Saturday morning and by appointment.

Please pray for those preparing to receive the sacraments.

Baptisms: New Baptism classes will commence in **January 2022**

First Holy Communion: You may begin now to enroll for next year’s classes for those not in Catholic schools. Please send names to the parish office. Would you consider volunteering as a Catechist?

Confirmation: Please pray for the **40 young parishioners** who have enrolled for Confirmation, and for the Catechists.

RCIA: Are you or anyone you know **interested in joining the Catholic Church**, or just wish to learn more about the faith? Please send us an email or call the Parish Office to give your details. God Bless!

In St. Vincent's: We remember in our prayers all the intentions on the St. Vincent's Prayer Board. Please add your intentions to the Prayer Board in church and you can see who is in need of our prayers on our website under "Thoughts for the week".

In Our Lady's: Irene Cox, Lee Abernathy, Janice Cook, Eileen Melia, Annie Topping, Theresa Burrows, Josephine O'Hagan, Denise Corlet, Nora Reade, Tommy Higgins, Marie Kenefick, Eileen Mains, Beryl Collins, Josie Vaughan, Michael Heath, Honora Hague, Victoria Russell, Sophie Mansfield, Mary Brett, Vivienne Goostry, John Wynne, Vincent Tracey, Ronald Fury, Veronica Gallagher, Aine O'Callaghan, Mary Murphy, Kathleen Bond, Jordan Harris, Alana Walsh, Jean Eginton, Mary Glindon and Sean O'Callaghan.

In St. Ambrose's: Mavis Doggett, Terry Skorzewski, Khia Whitehead, Eleanor Loftus, Mary Andrusiak, Carl Stanley, C. Wootton, Mary Sein, Paul Thuoc, Barry Lloyd, Andrew Way, Mary Young, Irene Walker, Veronica Norbury, John Holt, Imelda Judge, Veronica Lane, Joanna Winter, Pat Judge, Paul McClure, Helen Jenkins, Marie Hughes.

Recently Departed: May the soul Michael Walsh, Peter Felstead, and the souls of all our recently departed rest in peace.

Anniversaries

Maureen Sylvia Lohbach, Carl Aaron Forshaw, Angela Pugh Gerald Pinnington, Vincent Gerald Adamson, Thomas Joseph Connell, Lucy Ann Core, Christopher Doherty, Aleksander Hertsko, Annie McKee, Goerigina Webb, Joe Selby, Frank Maguire, Samuel Fidler, Eileen Fleming.

General Notices:

Year of St. Joseph: "The name of Joseph will be our protection during all the days of our life, but above all at the moment of death." (Blessed William Joseph Chaminade)

Confirmation Group. Important Dates. All to be held at Our Lady and The Apostles. **1st Dec. 7pm** — Service of reconciliation; **8th Dec., 7pm** — Confirmation Rehearsal; **9th Dec., 7pm** Mass of Confirmation by Bishop Mark.

News From the Diocese: 'Bishop Mark will be leading us in prayer at the Cathedral for Holy Hour on Wednesday 1st December at 5pm. Once again this year, we will be praying for all those across society that have been effected by abuse. In our busy lives running up until Christmas, this Holy Hour provides us all with an opportunity to reflect and pray for the strength of God to aid those around us within our parishes and communities who may be facing challenges. We are evidently not clear of the pandemic yet and the journey has presented challenges for many in their daily lives. For those impacted by abuse that present themselves for help and those that still remain unseen, please remember them in your prayers. The Holy Hour will be live streamed via the Shrewsbury Cathedral Church Services link: <https://www.churchservices.tv/shrewsburycathedral> and of course the Cathedral doors will be open for those wishing to attend.'

Gift Mass Sunday 12th December: - Caritas would appreciate any gifts for children this Christmas. Please wrap your gifts and label with the gender and age **range appropriate for that gift.** Caritas are also happy to receive online donations (see poster in the porch)

Job Opportunity:- Renewal North West are looking for a Christian Candidate to outreach to the customers while running the new coffee shop next to the Renewal North West on Shaw Heath. They are looking for a candidate with experience in the hospitality/catering sector with relevant training. Salary 22K for 5 days a week including Saturdays. Email Andrew Callicott projects@renewal-nw.com www.renewal-nw.com 07521 918 322 *Bringing Hope Through Jesus Christ.*

Stockport Talking Newspaper :- 'We read and record local news for free issue weekly in audio form on USB sticks to blind and VI listeners. Also we create a special monthly free audio magazine for them, essentially Stopfordian in content. We can provide a very easy to use player on long-term loan. All postage costs are covered under free 'Articles for the Blind' service. To enable us to set up those who are blind or visually impaired with our free service phone call to the Stockport Deaf and Blind Centre in Walthew House 0161 480 2612. Online at stockporttalkingnewspaper.org.uk'

Mass for all who died in the times of Pandemic: We thank all who helped to organise this.


Avent Retreat Day: on Saturday 27 November at St Peter's, Green Lane, Hazel Grove entitled "As we wait in joyful hope" – 9.30am start in the parish centre. Bring your packed lunch.

Shrewsbury Lourdes Hospitality—12th December 2021 - Mass to Celebrate 70 years of the Lourdes pilgrimage - 3pm - St Vincent's Knutsford, WA16 6HR celebrated by Bishop Mark followed by refreshments in the parish centre. Please note there will be **Shrewsbury Lourdes Hospitality Meeting** before the Mass at 1.30pm. This meeting will take the form of a hybrid meeting, with both the option to attend in-person or via Zoom. Please note for this meeting Zoom will be audio only. Join us at St Vincent's, Tatton Street, Knutsford, WA16 6HR. Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83473360425?pwd=blUuU1JtbTRTMjJUL0hQRTNlQnFRdz09> Meeting ID: 834 7336 0425. You can also call in if you don't have access to zoom, on +44 131 460 1196. If you could please register your attendance and make any requests for the password, apologies or items for the agenda to secretary@teamshrewsbury.co.uk or text/call 07451 249267. All details of events can be found on the website: www.teamshrewsbury.co.uk

Last weekend's collections (excludes standing orders): **OLATA- £541.98 St Ambrose- £104.55 St Vincent's- £128.65**
THANK YOU!

Offertory envelopes can be obtained from the Parish Office or see links for online giving to the Parishes: Please check our websites.

Proposed times for Christmas Masses:-

Fri 24th Dec 	Christmas Eve <i>Vigil Masses for Christmas</i>	4.30pm 4.45pm 5.45pm (6pm Mass) Midnight	St. Ambrose's Children's Mass St. Vincent's Children's Mass Our Lady's Carols Children's Mass (After Carols) Our Lady's Midnight Mass
Sat 25th Dec	The Nativity of the Lord	9.15am 9.30am 10.45am	St. Vincent's St. Ambrose's Our Lady's
Sun 26th Dec	Holy Family Sunday	9.15am 10.30am 10.45am	St Vincent's St Ambrose's Our Lady's

Our Lady's News

Ministers of The Eucharist at Our Lady's—if you are a Eucharistic Minister at Our Lady's and feel able to resume the ministry at Mass and in visiting the sick and housebound, please could you let us know by emailing the parish office, telephoning or by a note through the letter box. We are hoping to begin visiting the sick and housebound with Holy Communion as soon as possible. Please let us know if you (or anyone you know) would like to receive Holy Communion at home so that arrangements can be made. Fr Martin would also like to begin visiting the sick and housebound and if you would welcome a visit, again, please let us know.

The Piety Stall—is now open and has confirmation and communion cards and gifts, Christmas cards - single and boxes - advent calendars and a selection of rosary beads.

Our Lady's Cleaning Team:- After the first lockdown the 4 regular cleaning teams joined along with other volunteers to 'deep clean' the church each Monday morning from 10am and we are most grateful to everyone for their time. All volunteers are not available every week, so to keep the session to 1 to 1 and a half hours maximum we are asking if anyone feels able to join us at 10am on Monday morning. We would be delighted to welcome you or, if you need more information, please ring Hazel on 483 8200.

Children's Liturgy: Hand sanitisers will be available and surfaces will be wiped down. The leaders will be wearing face masks as per the diocese guidance and we respectfully ask any parents/ guardians to wear a face mask if attending with children. Please can we ask that children do not attend if they have been in contact with anyone who is covid positive, have a temperature, cough or cold symptoms to avoid spreading viruses to others.

St Ambrose News

Fr Martin is available for confessions at St Ambrose' after Mass on Thursday mornings.

Ministers of the Eucharist: if you are a Eucharistic Minister and feel able to resume the ministry at Mass and in visiting the sick and housebound, please could you let us know by emailing or telephoning the parish office or Marge, or by a note through the presbytery letter box.

Christmas Raffle: We will be holding a Christmas raffle and tickets will be on sale after Mass. Please hand in any raffle prizes you can donate, as soon as possible. All contributions, including bottles, chocolates and unwanted gifts gratefully accepted! The raffle will be held on Saturday 18th December.

St Vincent's News:

Fr Martin is available for confessions at St Vincent's after Mass on Wednesday mornings.

Travelling Nativity: Please sign up today to host the Travelling Nativity. The figures will be going to their first home on Sunday 28th November. **Advent Prayer group** starts on Monday morning.

Prayer List - at the beginning of each church year we start the prayer list anew. Please write your intentions on a Prayer slip and put them on the Prayer Board. They will also be displayed on the website in Thoughts for the Week - Prayer Intentions.

An update on our Community Sponsorship family: is on the website under Parish Life/ Groups

Gift Mass Sunday 12th December: - Caritas would appreciate any gifts for children this Christmas. Please see preceding page.

Please send any items for inclusion in the newsletter to the Parish Office by lunchtime on Thursday. Kindly indicate parish of choice for you mass intentions. Bear in mind that dates might not be available.

Our Lady and the Apostles, Shaw Heath, Stockport SK3 8BQ St. Ambrose, Adswold Road, Stockport, SK3 3QA, St. Vincent de Paul, 29 Handley Road, Bramhall, Stockport, SK7 3E

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