

PRINCIPLES RELATED TO THE SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE  
AND THE OBLIGATION TO PRESERVE IT

1. Human life is created and sustained by God. As such, it belongs to God, is dependent on Him for its existence, and is to be used according to His will.
2. Human embryos, from the first moment of their fertilization, are individual instances of human life. As such, they are potential human beings, which means that they are on the way to becoming human beings.
3. Human beings, unlike all other creatures on earth, are made in the image of God. This image involves personal, moral, and spiritual likeness.
4. Because human beings are God's image bearers, human life is sacred in a way that all other forms of life on earth are not.
5. Because human life is sacred, human beings are under a sacred obligation to preserve it, whether in themselves or in others.
6. Some obligations take precedence over others. The obligation to preserve human life takes precedence over the obligation to preserve possessions, but does not take precedence over the obligation to preserve the truth of God.
7. The sacred obligation to preserve human life carries with it the responsibility to protect and defend human life against anyone or anything that threatens to take it away unlawfully.
8. The sacred obligation to preserve human life is binding on societies as well as individuals.
9. The responsibility to protect and defend human life may involve some form of personal or societal defensive action against persons or things that threaten to take it away unlawfully. In some instances, personal or societal defensive action may involve the use of some form of physical restraint of persons or things that threaten or attempt to take away human life unlawfully. Such physical restraint may involve the use of force.
10. Punishment of persons who not only threaten and/or attempt, but succeed in taking away human life unlawfully, is not the right and responsibility of individuals, but of society.
11. Societal punishment of individuals who take away human life unlawfully may take various forms, ranging from fines, to imprisonment, to death, depending on the nature and degree of responsibility involved.