

Encyclical: Keeping pro-life sensibility can help during tough times

WASHINGTON - Keeping a pro-life sensibility during hard economic times can actually help a society through those trying years, Pope Benedict XVI said in his third encyclical, "Caritas in Veritate" ("Charity in Truth").

In a social encyclical on development and the world's financial crisis, the pope said it is important to keep in mind the teaching of "Humanae Vitae," Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical on human life, and said being pro-life is being pro-development.

If society sees a new baby as a problem, how will its citizens view the poor? the pope asked in the encyclical, released July 7.

"When a society moves toward the denial or suppression of life, it ends up no longer finding the necessary motivation and energy to strive for man's true good," Pope Benedict said. "The acceptance of life strengthens moral fiber and makes people capable of mutual help."

In promoting a culture of life, the pope suggested people look not only at the issue of abortion, but also at the planet as a living being. If people destroy their environment, they will also destroy their own life source, he said.

The pope also addressed life as part of the cultural struggle between the supremacy of technology and human moral responsibility in the field of bioethics.

"It is no coincidence that closing the door to transcendence brings one up short against a difficulty: How could being emerge from nothing, how could intelligence be born from chance?" he asked. "Faced with these dramatic questions, reason and faith can come to each other's assistance. Only together will they save man."