

What you Probably Didn't Hear the Pope Say

Much attention was given the Pope's extensive and enlightening interview which appeared in *America*, a Catholic magazine published by the Holy Father's religious order, the Society of Jesus. And rightly so, as it offered an intimate gaze into the soul of Pope Francis, an opportunity for us to better know the Successor of Peter and the Vicar of Christ.

In the letter I wrote to the faithful of the Archdiocese shortly after his interview was released, I shared what I felt the Pope was saying to us: that we must first know and accept God's love, that we must first enter into a personal relationship with Jesus before we can radiate that love and see living a Gospel life in accord with the Commandments as a response to that love instead of a burden. For once we fully accept God's love our minds and our hearts are opened to the beauty of what the Church believes and teaches about the sanctity of life, the vocation of marriage, and others issues often now seen as counter-cultural.

The day after the Pope's interview was published and reported on around the world, the Holy Father spoke again. Unfortunately, his words—though just as important, perhaps even more so many would argue—made far fewer headlines. Speaking about the sanctity of life and the dignity of every person, the Pope said each of us has a responsibility to “Bear witness to and disseminate this ‘culture of life’ ... remind all through actions and words that in all its phases and at any age, life is always sacred and always of quality. And not as a matter of faith, but of reason and science! There is no human life more sacred than another, just as there exists no human life qualitatively more meaningful than another.”

The Pope beautifully and simply summed up the foundation of our Church's teachings. On this weekend, when our Church in the United States observes Respect Life Sunday, we take heart in the words of our Holy Father and are reminded that our efforts to protect life, to affirm the dignity of those near death, as well as those who turn to the Church for food, clothing, shelter, education, and, above all, love, are rooted in the belief that all life is sacred, and no human life is more sacred than

another.