

The meaning of the term “Life”

Rather, the term "life" must be redefined, moving from an abstract conception to a “personal” dimension: life is people, men and women, both in the individuality of each person and in the unity of the human family. Starting from our origin from the one Father, “all of us in the universe are united by invisible bonds and in a way we form a universal family.” (LS 89). The Pope thus evokes the dynamics of generation—passive reception of life is the premise for every subsequent activity, leading to the recognition of being one’s child, welcomed and cared for, even if not always adequately. This is the starting point for the recognition of the social bond that makes us support one another and that, because it is reciprocal, asks us to be responsible for each other: The Pope tells us that ...“It seems reasonable to build a bridge between the care that has been received since the beginning of life, and that has enabled it to unfold throughout the course of its development, and care that is to be given to others.” (N. 9).

This way of understanding human life, starting from the experience that ties it to relationships, asks, from the beginning, to be appropriately connected to the multiple ways in which bioethics considers the questions of life. It is a task that requires commitment. It is a reference point, not only for the ethical questions that are asked about the beginning and end of life, but also for questions of synthetic biology or about organisms that combine biological tissues and electronic devices.

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