



November 2022

Highlights of this newsletter:

- ❖ [Advent and Aging](#)
- ❖ [Upcoming Events](#)
- ❖ [Pray Always](#)

Dear Friends for Life,

## ADVENT AND AGING

Let us prepare the Way of the Lord! The season of Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas when we celebrate the first coming of our Savior in a humble stable two millennia ago. But we begin Advent with a focus also on the Second Coming when Christ will return in great glory signifying the culmination of human history.

Be vigilant, be ready: “Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come” (Matthew 24:42). This holds true, too, for the death of our earthly bodies. And so, we are reminded to *strive always to be in a state of grace*, through the intercession of Mary Most Holy and of St. Joseph—that when we are called from this world, we may spend Eternity with the Lord in the company of the Angels and Saints—our ultimate destiny.<sup>1</sup> It follows that our preparation for Advent (prayer, fasting, sacramental confession, etc.) are good practices all year long!

As we conclude November, it is noteworthy that this month is dedicated to the Holy Souls. Also, in marking the final days of the liturgical year, it leads into Advent, so already you might have spent a good deal of time more deeply contemplating the fact that each of us will die one day. This is a good practice, and in fact, there is an efficacious medieval tradition, *memento mori* in which one keeps the reality of his or her inevitable death in daily focus as motivation to increased holiness.<sup>2</sup>

In a 2006 address on the meaning of death, Pope Benedict XVI pointed out a most profound notion that “To die, in fact, is part of life and not only of its end, but, if we pay attention, of every instant.”<sup>3</sup> That continuous dying process is the nature of our mortal bodies from the moment of conception, but one most poignantly endured as one experiences with advanced age the loss of physical prowess, cognitive function, social contacts and stature, sense of usefulness, etc.

But these progressive and involuntary minor hardships and major trials are also opportunity for an emptying of self (both of the aging individual and caregivers) that can make way for the love and joy of Christ in preparation for entering Eternal Life—a very personal Advent of sorts. This movement, an intentional realization of authentic beauty and love, grounded in the dignity of the human person, can be an incredible

<sup>1</sup> [Benedict XVI On the Meaning of Death - Featured Today - Catholic Online](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Why Memento Mori? - Aleteia](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Benedict XVI On the Meaning of Death - Featured Today - Catholic Online](#)

time of witness, existential purpose, and spiritual flourishing. We live out the truth that we belong to each other because we belong to God, created in His image and likeness. Each day in this journey is one day palpably closer in time to our eternal destiny, and likewise, through this internal conversion, one step closer to God and our necessary sanctification. This sacrifice and accompaniment which transform suffering into redemption, fulfillment, and even anticipation of the promises of Christ, constitute a “Theology of Aging” and likewise is applicable to severe debility regardless of age.

Certainly, for neither the giver nor receiver of care is this an easy path, and therefore, it is one more often shunned in our utility-driven culture, but it is one that should not be set aside. Coincidentally, November is Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month—an appropriate time to ponder the Theology of Aging—how it involves you, those you love, and our culture, in both care-giving and care-receiving roles, all ordered towards Christ.

*But if you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God.  
For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an  
example that you should follow in his footsteps.  
1 Peter 2:20-21*

I invite you to review this [video](#) discussion on the “Theology of Aging” featuring Dr. Janet E. Smith, to read this month’s Making Sense of Bioethics column from Fr. Tad, and to visit our website for more resources related to the Theology of Aging, and in particular memory loss.<sup>4</sup>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

With elections behind us, prayer, fasting and education are our priorities. Do not be discouraged, though: We know the battle has already been won—Christ is victorious! Nevertheless, we must continue our efforts to bring His message—the Gospel of Life—to the world.

Please refer to our website for more information on the [National Night of Prayer for Life](#) (December 8-9) and plans for the upcoming [March for Life](#) (January 20, 2023).

Finally, know that in our Office we are grateful for all God’s gifts, especially those of Life, our Catholic Faith and our beloved families, but also for the opportunity to walk with you as we promote and defend the sanctity of all human life. We wish you a most fruitful Advent season, one that draws you more closely to God and Eternal Life with Him.

## PRAY ALWAYS

The **St. Andrew Christmas Novena** is traditionally recited fifteen times each day from November 30 (the Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle) until Christmas:

**St. Andrew Christmas Novena**  
Hail and blessed be the hour and moment  
in which the Son of God

---

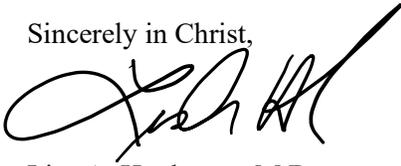
<sup>4</sup> [A Theology of Aging – Janet E. Smith, PhD \(janetsmith.org\)](#)

was born of the most pure Virgin Mary,  
at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold.

In that hour, vouchsafe, O my God,  
to hear my prayers and grant my desires,  
through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ,  
and of His Blessed Mother. Amen.

Please see the rest of the newsletter for all upcoming activities and consider joining us for the Rosary for Life on Fridays at 3:00 p.m. God bless you!

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Honkanen', with a large, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Lisa A. Honkanen, M.D.