



# KNIGHTS FOR LIFE

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*In defense of our unborn brothers and sisters*

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## **OCTOBER 07 Talking Points for Council Pro-Life Chairman**

**Pope: "The fundamental human right, the presupposition of every other right, is the right to life itself"**

**"Abortion Cannot be a Human Right - It is the Very Opposite"**

By John-Henry Westen

VIENNA, September 7, 2007 (LifeSiteNews.com) - In an address to Austrian political leaders today, Pope Benedict XVI centered his remarks on the right to life. "It was in Europe that the notion of human rights was first formulated," he began. "The fundamental human right, the presupposition of every other right, is the right to life itself."

The Pope first addressed abortion specifically. "This is true of life from the moment of conception until its natural end. Abortion, consequently, cannot be a human right - it is the very opposite," he said.

Benedict noted that it was not merely a matter of the Church but one of all humanity. "We are acting as advocates for a profoundly human need, speaking out on behalf of those unborn children who have no voice." He added: "I do not close my eyes to the difficulties and the conflicts which many women are experiencing, and I realize that the credibility of what we say also depends on what the Church herself is doing to help women in trouble."

"I appeal, then, to political leaders not to allow children to be considered as a form of illness, nor to abolish in practice your legal system's acknowledgment that abortion is wrong. I say this out of a concern for humanity."

The Holy Father also pointed out that Europe must embrace life once again to ensure a future, as it is imploding demographically. The continent, he said "demographically, is rapidly aging."

He spoke of the "need to do everything possible to make European countries once again open to welcoming children." He continued, "Encourage young married couples to establish new families and to become mothers and fathers! You will not only assist them, but you will benefit society as a whole."

Pledging the support of the Church to these endeavours Benedict said, "We also decisively support you in your political efforts to favour conditions enabling young couples to raise children. Yet all this will be pointless, unless we can succeed in creating once again in our countries a climate of joy and confidence in life, a climate in which children are not seen as a burden, but rather as a gift for all."

The Holy Father also addressed euthanasia and assisted suicide in his remarks. "Another great concern of mine is the debate on what has been termed 'actively assisted death'. It is to be feared that at some point the gravely ill or elderly will be subjected to tacit or even explicit pressure to request death or to administer it to themselves." "The proper response to end-of-life suffering is loving care and accompaniment on the journey towards death - especially with the help of palliative care - and not 'actively assisted death'."

Echoing what anti-euthanasia activists have said for years, the Pope pointed out that society will veer toward euthanasia unless healthcare systems provide proper care for the critically ill and dying.

"But if humane accompaniment on the journey towards death is to prevail, urgent structural reforms are needed in every area of the social and healthcare system, as well as organized structures of palliative care," he said. "Concrete steps would also have to be taken: in the psychological and pastoral accompaniment of the seriously ill and dying, their family members, and physicians and healthcare personnel."