



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NORTH-AMERICAN BISHOPS
GATHERED IN DALLAS**

Dear Brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ,

It is with great hope, and with great enthusiasm, that I send my greetings to all of you assembled in Dallas. This important workshop, sponsored by the Pope John XXIII Medical-Moral Research and Education Center, and generously supported by the Knights of Columbus, is a splendid initiative at the service of truth and at the service of the human person. The gathering of such a large number of Bishops from the United States and Canada manifests a consciousness of your pastoral responsibilities as authentic teachers of God's people, who are called to live their Christian lives in the modern world.

The theme of your deliberations, *The New Technologies of Birth and Death*, touches upon complex and vexing questions of medical ethics which face the Church and all of society. I had occasion in *Redemptor Hominis* [1] to make the following statement : "The development of technology and the development of contemporary civilization, which is marked by the ascendancy of technology, demand a proportional development of morals and ethics. For the present, this last development seems unfortunately to be always left behind".

In your joint efforts in Dallas, you are zealously echoing the sentiments of my heart expressed last October in Washington, D.C.: "I do not hesitate to proclaim before you and before the world that all human life — from the moment of conception and through all subsequent stages — is sacred, because human life is created in the image and likeness of God".

Our task is to proclaim ever more effectively this sacredness of human life. But in order to do so, we must understand the new opportunities and the new threats that are posed to the human person by ever developing technologies. At this important moment of history, you are called, as

Bishops, to furnish timely leadership by examining new questions in the light of God's eternal Word, and with the help offered by the Church's teaching. In this context, your reflections, aided by the physicians, theologians and attorneys generously sharing their knowledge and experience at this workshop, will help to contribute to that "proportional development of morals and ethics" which the contemporary situation se earnestly demands.

Dear Brothers : this is a great and vital contribution of the servant Church of Jesus Christ to the men and women of our day.

May God bless the Pope John Center in its desire and commitment to be of service to the Magisterium of the Church and to the cause of humanity. And may the Holy Spirit direct your minds and hearts to enter more fully into the mysteries of his divine wisdom and to be ever more inflamed with his love.

To all who are attending this meeting, and to all who have helped to make it possible I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing : in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

29 January 1980

[1] *Redemptor Hominis*, n.15.
