

# THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

*Study Guide by the SISTERS OF LIFE*

## CHAPTER 1, PART 2: QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. John Paul II acknowledges that “decisions that go against life sometimes arise from difficult or even tragic situations of profound suffering, loneliness, a total lack of economic prospects, depression, and anxiety about the future” (*Evangelium Vitae paragraph 18*). How would addressing these situations help to enable men and women to be able to make life-affirming choices?
2. “Rather than societies of ‘people living together’, our cities risk becoming societies of people who are rejected, marginalized, uprooted, and oppressed” (*EV 18*). Reflect on this. Have you seen this to be true? How is God calling you to build communion?
3. What does it mean that “man [is] a being who is not to be used?” (*EV 19*) How is use the opposite of love?
4. Why is the equation of “personal dignity with the capacity for verbal and explicit, or at least perceptible, communication” (*EV 19*) not a true measure of human dignity?
5. Is the “notion of freedom which exalts the isolated individual in an absolute way” (*EV 19*) an accurate image of freedom? Why or why not? What does John Paul II say about freedom and relationship?
6. Why does freedom have an essential link with truth (cf. *EV 19*)?
7. John Paul II describes “the heart of the tragedy being experienced by modern man” as “the eclipse of the sense of God and of man” (*EV 21*). He says, “when the sense of God is lost, there is also a tendency to lose the sense of man” (*EV 21*). How have you seen this eclipse?
8. How is it that when “man is no longer able to see himself as ‘mysteriously different’ from other earthly creatures”, he “busies himself” with “doing”, “controlling”, and “programming” (*EV 22*)?
9. How is the body “a properly personal reality, a sign and place of relations with others, with God and with the world” (*EV 23*)?
10. “It is always from [the] intimate sanctuary of the conscience that a new journey of love, openness and service to human life can begin” (*EV 24*). Why is formation of conscience so

important, both personally and socially? What happens when the light of conscience is clouded?

11. "The blood of Christ, while it reveals the grandeur of the Father's love, shows how precious man is in God's eyes and how priceless the value of his life" (EV 25). Take some time to pray with this, perhaps looking at a crucifix. Ask the Lord for the grace to experience how precious you are to Him.

12. John Paul II says that "Christ's blood reveal to man that his greatness, and therefore his vocation, consists in *the sincere gift of self*" (EV 25). How have you made a sincere gift of yourself in your own life? In this, did you experienced yourself becoming more fully yourself?

13. Jesus conquered sin and death by his Cross and Resurrection. John Paul II says that "it is precisely this blood [of Christ] that is the *most powerful source of hope, indeed it is the foundation of the absolute certitude that in God's plan life will be victorious*" (EV 26). Reflect on the fact that God's love triumphs over evil and darkness. How have you seen examples of this in the world? In your own life?

14. John Paul II names many signs of hope in the world, and "*all those daily gestures of openness, sacrifice, and unselfish care* which countless people lovingly make in families, hospitals, orphanages, homes for the elderly and other centers or communities which defend life" (EV 27). What are signs of hope that you have seen? How are you a sign of hope for others?

15. Each of us are given the daily choice to choose between life and death, in all the little moments of each day (i.e. choosing to think of myself kindly vs. with self-contempt; responding to this person with charity vs. with impatience; deciding to watch this movie that inspires and encourages me vs. a movie that degrades the dignity of the person, etc.). What are situations that I am commonly confronted with where I have to make these choices?

16. John Paul II writes that "nothing helps us so much to face positively the conflict between death and life in which we are engaged as faith in the Son of God who became man and dwelt among men so 'that they may have life, and have it abundantly' (Jn 10:10)" (EV 28). Take some time to talk with the Lord today about any battle you are experiencing. What does He say about it? How is He inviting you to move in it?