

Dignity of the Human Person

The Death Penalty



by Declan Walsh
Grade 7

Daily, there are reports of horrific crimes such as murder, kidnapping, and treason. We are told we are safe and should continue our daily lives, but what happens to those who commit these crimes? We know how awful prison is and why we should do whatever it takes to avoid it. Sometimes the perpetrators of these heinous crimes are not sentenced to time in prison but to death. Today in the United States, 27 of the 50 states allow the death penalty. These convicts have been convicted of awful acts and deserve punishment, but the death penalty is not the answer to this problem.

The death penalty impedes the most fundamental aspect of human dignity - one's a basic right to live. According to Article One of the United States Constitution, "Every human being has the right to life, liberty, and the security of his person." The death penalty undermines human dignity and is no longer necessary to maintain a safe society. The death penalty removes dangerous people from the community, but individuals can be imprisoned. The death penalty is also used to scare people from committing crimes because it is a harsh consequence.

However, the death penalty does not have the deterrent effect that its supporters want. Since 1990, states with the death penalty have had significantly higher crime rates than anti-death pen-



Anti-Death Penalty crusader Sister Helen Prejean.

alty states. This illustrates that the threat of the death penalty is not keeping society safer.

The death penalty is not administered equally. Systemic racism is a significant issue, and the death penalty is a part of this issue. The number of convictions that end the death penalty disproportionately affects minority communities. There have been cases of the death penalty applied to



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“Every human being has the right to life, liberty, and the security of his person.”

United States Constitution

people who were later found to be innocent. The death penalty is, therefore, unfair. Although not many people are executed each year, the overuse of sending people to death row is a recurring problem. Around 2,500 convicted prisoners are now waiting to face their execution. Last year, eighteen prisoners were executed. People have been known to spend more than twenty years on death row. It is hard to maintain dignity while waiting to die.

The Catholic Church teaches us about the importance of the dignity of life and is staunchly anti-death penalty. Many of the recipients of the death penalty got unlucky or grew up in a system that works against them, and they deserve a second chance before being put to death at the hands of the government or spending their lives waiting for the government to kill them.

What are our Responsibilities as Catholics to Stop Cyberbullying?



by **Julian Salazar**
Grade 8

Cyberbullying is becoming more common daily, and it can have long-lasting effects. What is cyberbullying? It uses digital devices like cell phones, tablets, gaming systems, and computers to harass, embarrass, or threaten another person. The results of cyberbullying can cause mental health issues to the victim, increase stress, and anxiety, cause depression, lower self-esteem, create anger in the person, cause the person to do poorly in school, and can even lead to suicide. There are also effects on the bullies, including getting suspended or expelled from school, getting removed from sports teams, and legal trouble.

According to my research on DoSomething.org, 37% of students between the ages of 12-17 in the United States say they have experienced some form of cyberbullying. It can be stalking, posting mean messages to or about a person, sending neg-

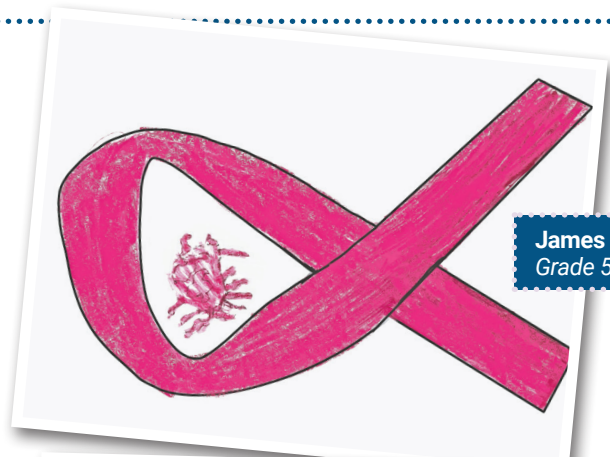
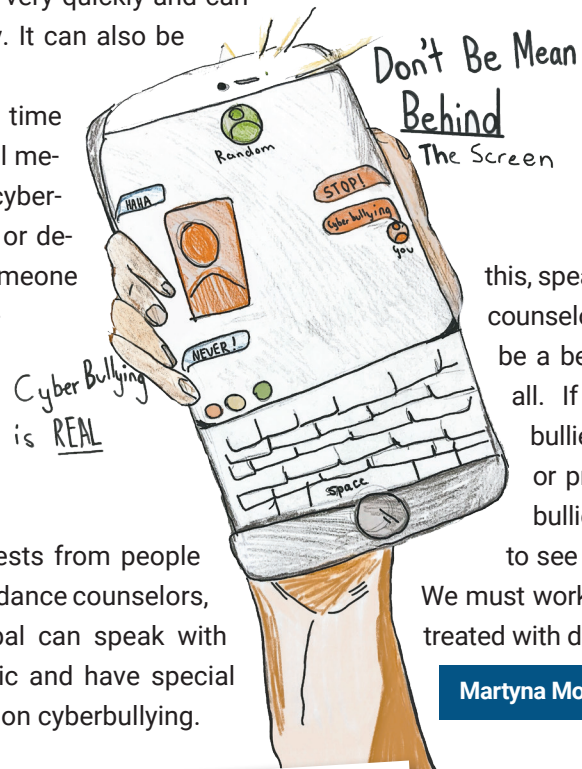
ative messages to the person directly, and posting a private or hurtful photo or video on social media. Cyberbullying can be more difficult to escape from regular bullying because technology can reach larger groups of people very quickly and can be out there indefinitely. It can also be anonymous online.

Limiting how much time children spend on social media can help prevent cyberbullying. You can block or delete your account if someone is cyberbullying you. Remember not to post anything that can hurt or embarrass you. Control who you can see posts and accept friend requests from people you know. Teachers, guidance counselors, priests, and the principal can speak with students about the topic and have special guest speakers present on cyberbullying.

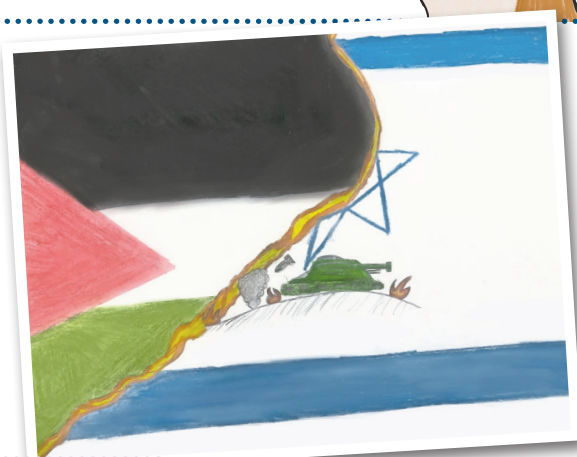
Leviticus 19:18 teaches us, "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself." We should treat everyone with respect. If you have cyberbullied someone, apologize to them and promise not to do it again. Sometimes, you may be in a situation where you are cyberbullying someone without meaning to. In cases like

this, speak to your parents, teachers, and counselor, and get the help you need to be a better Christian and person overall. If you witness someone being bullied, report it to a parent, teacher, or priest. We can also speak to the bullied student and check on them to see how they are doing and feeling. We must work together to ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

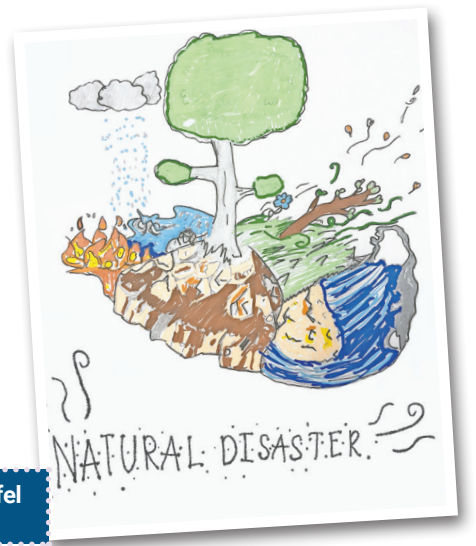
Martyna Modzelewski, Grade 5



James Hank Hass
Grade 5



Andrea Calderini
Grade 5



Samantha Kufel
Grade 5



Manon Hannecart
Grade 5



Juliette Gorczyca
Grade 8

ASK Sister Elizabeth



What should you do if you encounter a bully?

Lauren Baker, Grade 7

I do hope, Lauren, that you haven't had to experience this firsthand. It could be quite painful, but you must know that the "bully" wins if you show your hurt or anger. Jesus was bullied so many times by those who didn't believe he was the Messiah. Jesus knew who He was and walked away, continuing to do what He was called to teach the people about God's love for them. If you are being bullied, as hard as it will be, you have to walk away. That's not easy, but confrontation makes you no better than the one doing the bullying. If you witness someone being bullied, stand with the victim and offer comfort and understanding. Tell an adult you trust who will handle the situation.

How can we show respect and dignity to people who have come here from other countries?

Anthony Puk, Grade 7

I'm sure, Anthony, you know that America is made up of immigrants. If we trace our family history, we will find our ancestors came from another part of the world. When God created man, He made us in His image and likeness. This means that we should see God in the faces of the people we meet. Respect and dignity go hand in hand when you meet someone. It shouldn't matter where they came from; they are created by God, who created you and me. Christ welcomes all into His family. We should follow His example and be open to respecting and treating them as we want. Look inside the person and see who they are. Don't judge by the color of their skin or the language they speak. We are all one in the eyes of God.

Is saying sorry when we do something wrong ever enough?

Nicholas Joe, Grade 6

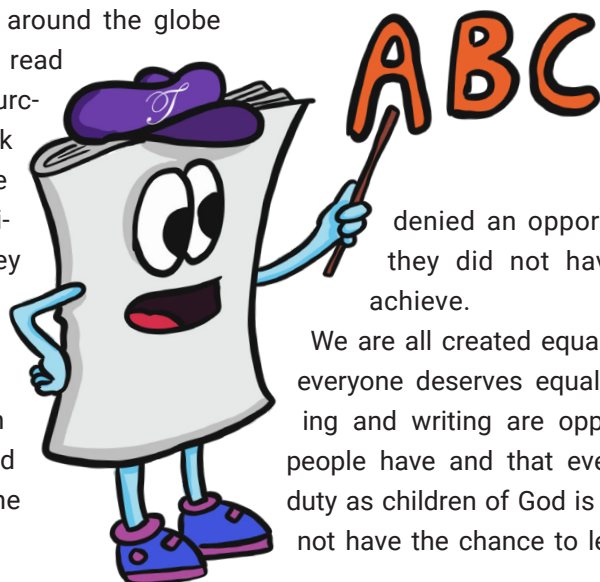
Hi Nicholas. "Saying sorry" is the first step when you've done something wrong. What follows the "I'm sorry" makes all the difference in true forgiveness. It takes a lot to say this, but how you act afterward will show whether you mean it and are genuinely sorry about what happened. People who say that they are sorry want forgiveness. Sometimes forgiveness only comes when the hurt person sees that the other is truly sincere and means it. "I'm sorry" is how to start the healing process between people; trust that it will lead to lasting forgiveness.

Taking Action Against Illiteracy



by **Charlotte Murawski**
Grade 8

Illiteracy is a global issue affecting millions of children and adults worldwide. Although everyone deserves the right to read and write, not everyone has this opportunity. As stated on savethechildren.net, "More than 393 million children and adolescents have failed to gain the basic literacy skills at age 10..." Children all around the globe have been unable to learn to read and write due to a lack of resources. Because these children lack the resources to become literate at a young age, many opportunities are limited for them as they grow up. Reading and writing are fundamental skills used in everyday life by many people worldwide. Millions of children cannot fulfill their dreams and other opportunities due to the struggle of illiteracy.



Illiteracy is a global issue that we must take action on. Crossrivertherapy.com states that Chad has a literacy rate of only 38%, meaning that most of the country's population is illiterate. They also say that Pakistan has a literacy rate of only 55%. According to Regis College, 34% of students in the United States are below basic reading level in the fourth grade. These statistics show that illiteracy is a global issue that limits opportunities for people worldwide. Everyone deserves the right to

read and write. Literacy is often needed for many jobs and other options, and no one should be denied an opportunity for something they did not have the resources to achieve.

We are all created equally by God. Therefore, everyone deserves equal opportunities. Reading and writing are opportunities that many people have and that everyone deserves. Our duty as children of God is to help those who do not have the chance to learn how to read and

write. Romans 2:11 "For God shows no partiality." This quote from the Bible shows that God created us all equally. Therefore we all deserve equal rights and opportunities.

Charity is a gift that we have all been given by the Holy Spirit. It refers to the unconditional love we must have towards God and other members of the human race. At SSKCA, we have used our gift of charity to help those who cannot learn how to read and write. Earlier this year, a club formed by one of our teachers held a book drive, to which over 450 books were donated. These books were given to less fortunate children who don't have the same opportunities or resources that we do. That way, their level of literacy could be improved. By donating these books, SSKCA made an impact that will last a lifetime for these children. Our school took part in helping many children expand their resources, which is the beginning of opening up many opportunities for them in the future.

TEACHER GUIDES

Instructional Resource Guides are available for each issue of The Tablet Jr. You can find the supplemental lessons on CTNBQ.ORG/TABLETJR

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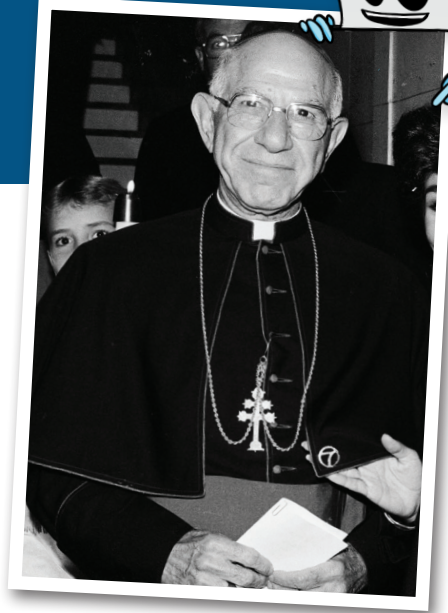
Diocesan History Corner

by Joseph Coen

Catholic Campaign for Human Development

In April 1970, Bishop Francis J. Mugavero, head of the Brooklyn Diocese, was named for a three-year period as the chairman of the United States Catholic Conference's bishops' committee for the new Campaign for Human Development. The campaign had begun the year before and it continues today. It is the American Catholic Bishops' way of carrying out the mission of Jesus Christ "... to bring good news to the poor ... release to captives ... sight to the blind, and let the oppressed go free." (Luke 4:18)

The campaign tries to break the cycle of poverty by helping low-income people participate in decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities. Believing that those who are directly affected by injustice know best how to bring about need changes, CCHD gives money to local groups which carry out projects to address local needs.



Bishop Francis J. Mugavero.

CCHD also seeks to teach people about poverty and why it happens. This way of education for justice and helping people who are poor speak and act for themselves reflects the words of the Scriptures and the ideas of Catholic social teaching.

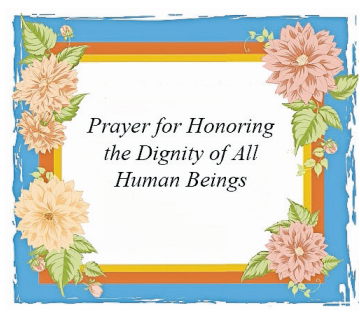
The educational efforts and local projects are made possible by the generous support of Catholics in the United States, through an annual parish collection.

Joseph Coen, C.A., is the archivist of the Diocese of Brooklyn.

FIND THE WORDS

CHARACTER	KINDNESS	SPECIAL	LIFE
COURAGE	POWER	STAND UP	RESPECT
FAIRNESS	PROTECT	DIGNITY	VALUE

Fun Activities for You from Sadlier www.sadlier.com



Dignity of the Human Person
The Dignity of the Human Person begins with looking in the mirror. Who do you see? You see

a person created by God. You see a person that God loves so much that He gave His only Son to save you. You see YOU! Read through these Bible

verses, first quietly to yourself and then aloud. Pick one and explain how it is important to the dignity of you.
Genesis 1: 26-31
Psalms 139: 13-16
1 Corinthians 3: 16
With your family: With dignity comes respect. Talk about the meaning of respect with your family. Start a list that tells how one family member was shown respect by someone else in the family. This could include doing chores,

apologizing, not using cruel nicknames. At the end of the week, go over the list together and talk about how it feels. Treating each person with respect is one of the central themes of Catholic Social Teaching. Use the QR code for a Prayer for Honoring the Dignity of All Human Beings Prayer Card. Recite the prayer to pledge your commitment to this aspect of your faith. Now that you pledged your commitment, what's next?

