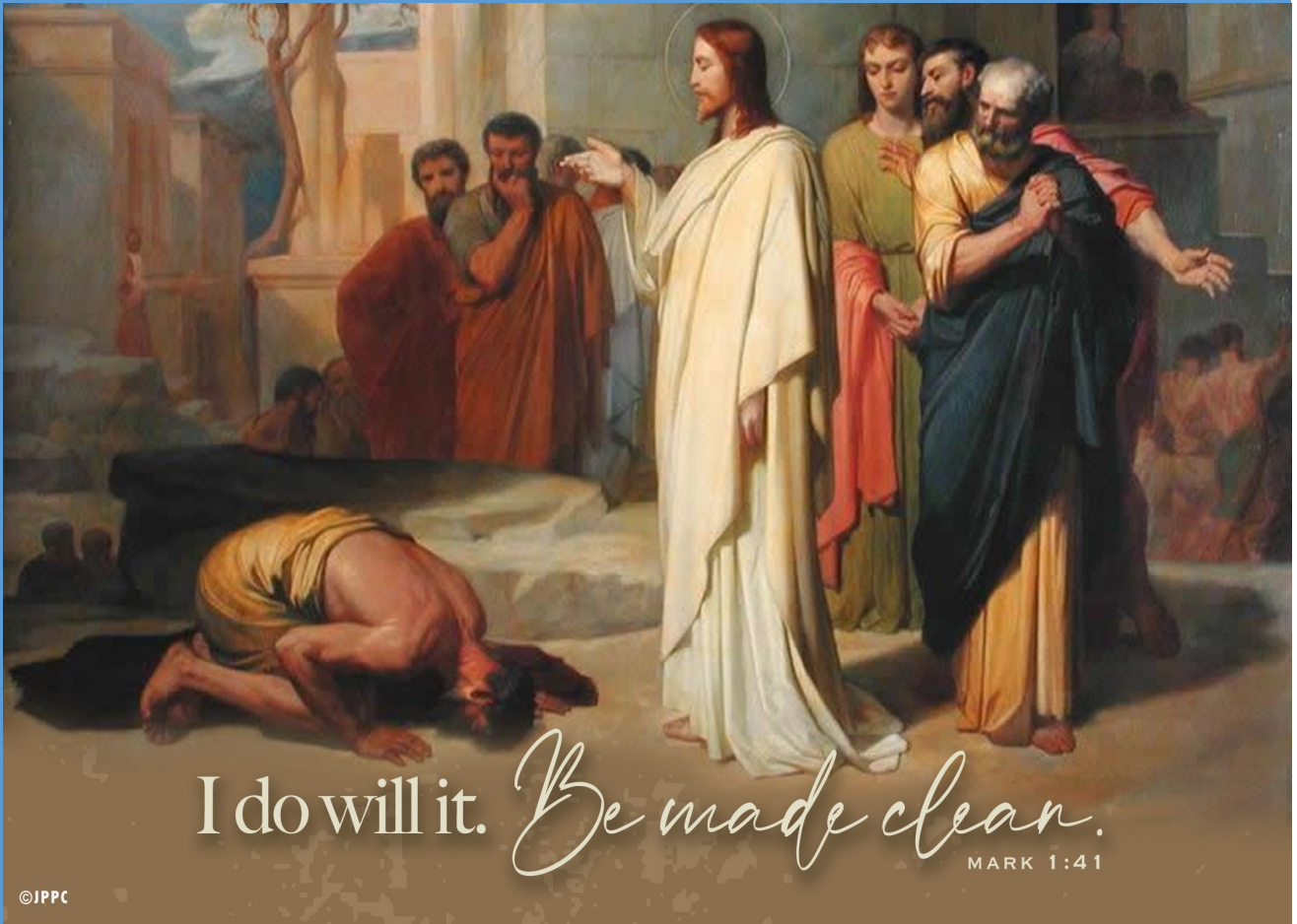




**6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**FEBRUARY 11, 2024**



I do will it. *Be made clean.*

MARK 1:41

©JPPC

**Mission Statement**

“Good Shepherd parish, under the guidance of the true Shepherd Jesus Christ, is a Catholic faith based community seeking to proclaim and live the gospel message. Recognizing our diversity, we strive to bring together a church family, welcoming all people as we grow together in faith, hope and love.”

**954 Stuyvesant Ave Irvington NJ 07111 Phone: (973) 375-8568**

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**Website: [www.goodshepherdnj.com](http://www.goodshepherdnj.com)**



**SERVED BY**

Rev. Valentine Ugwuanya Pastor  
Ed Stolarz Director of Music Ministry  
Denise Perry Secretary

For more information on our parish please go to:  
Goodshepherdnj.com  
Or email us at  
gsirvington@comcast.net

**SIXTH SUNDAY IN O.T. YR. B FEB. 11, 2024. FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK.**

We are on the threshold of Lenten Season and in three days from now will be Ash Wednesday. As many of us said and have been saying, we are tired of hearing this deadly corona virus which claimed millions of lives including our loved ones and relatives and isolating ourselves from each other with mask. And today's gospel talks about another contagious disease leprosy. Leprosy! Even today the very word "leprosy" has a harsh and intimidating sound to it. Today, we have a treatment for leprosy but nevertheless there are small pocket of new cases of leprosy some years ago or what some us of haven't get over it.

But in the time of Leviticus and in the time of our Lord Jesus Christ, there was no known treatment. Because the causes of the disease were not known, the person with leprosy was exiled from "healthy" human society. No one would want to be a leper, cut off from one's own family and friends are spurned by everyone because of fear of contagion. We have seen and experienced this type of isolation during the time of corona virus pandemic COVID-19.

The Gospel of today tells us how Jesus receives a leper. In those days, lepers were the most excluded and ostracized people of society, avoided by all. Lepers could not take part in anything. In olden days, the lack of effective medicines, the fear of contamination and the necessity of defending the life of society led people to isolate and exclude lepers. Besides, among the people of God whose defense of the gift of life was one of the most sacred duties, they thought that exclusion of lepers was a divine duty because it was the only way to defend the community from deadly contagion. Thus, in Israel, the leper felt impure and excluded not only by the society and his or her family, but even by God. (Lev. 14:1-32). Jesus, by getting himself in contact with the leper has made himself impure, contaminated and need to cleanse himself. As Isaiah the prophet said, "our sins he took upon himself and our sufferings he bore..."

Today being the sixth Sunday and the last Sunday before Lent begins, we need to ask ourselves these questions: Do I really want to be free from sin or set free? Am I willing to call out to the Lord Jesus and ask him to heal me? Am I willing not to segregate anyone because of his or social status or how the society marginalized them? Am I willing to begin a new life by accepting each other as people created in the image of God? Lord, may you heal me of the sickness in me and the prejudice in me.

**Good Shepherd Parish Schedule for Mass & Worship (schedules are subject to change)**

Saturday (anticipated) 5:30pm  
Holy Day TBD.

Sundays —9:00am, 11:00am  
Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:45-5:15pm

National Holidays —8:30am  
Adoration Mo-Fri 7:30am-5:00pm

**Mass Intentions For the week of February 10 - February 17, 2024**

Saturday 5:30pm For the Repose of the Soul of Elena & Domingo Bermudez  
Feb 10

Sunday 9:00am For the People of Good Shepherd Parish

Feb 11 11:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Celestina Ugwuanya

Monday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Carmen Desruisseaux  
Feb 12

Tuesday 7:00am For the Repose of the Soul of Rogelio Gonzaga  
Feb 13

Wednesday 7:00am For the Repose of The Soul of Catherine Halim  
12:00pm For God's Protection and Guidance of Denise Younker

Feb 14 7:00pm For God's Protection and Guidance of Cherly Laidlaw

Thursday 7:00am For the Repose of the soul of Jean Mede  
Feb 15

Friday 7:00am Thanksgiving for God's Tender Mercies and Favors Received  
Feb 16

Saturday 8:30am For the Repose of the Soul of Theodore Baumgarten

Feb 17 5:30pm For the Repose of the Soul of Deacon George Sica

*Kindly keep our parishioner's family, with health and other challenges, in your prayers*

Let us always remember in our prayers the sick members of our Parish

Denise Younker	Paul Kocum	Sandi Mosley	Debbie Watson	Rihanna Scott
Elizabeth Cassata	Pope Francis	Frank Rocchi	Camile Laidlaw	
Frederick Hamilton	Curtis Richards	Carlos Quinones	Venus Matthews	
Jean Michelin	Corizon Abuzied	Bob and Barbara Nezlick		

\* Please advise if any names should be added or delete from the list

**Hospital Privacy | Please remember that current privacy laws regarding patients in hospitals do not allow hospitals/ pastoral care offices to contact parishes. If you or a loved one are in the hospital and want a priest to visit, please call the I office at (973)375-8568**

**Announcement**  
**Our Church now has an Adoration Room. All are invited to visit the room, Mon-Fri 7:30AM-5:00PM.**  
**To gain access to the adoration room, reservations are required. Please visit the rectory to reserve your date and time.**

**Please contact Fr. Valentine or call the rectory if you are interested in Intensions, of a Sanctuary Lamp, Alter bread and wine or Alter Flowers**



**Ministries:** If you're interested in ministries of service either as a Lector or Eucharistic Minister, please call the rectory at 975-375-8568 or fill out the Information below and place in the collection basket.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Lector \_\_\_\_\_ Eucharistic Minister \_\_\_\_\_

**REPORT ABUSE**  
**Protecting God's Children**

The Archdiocese of Newark takes very seriously any and all credible complaints, and encourages anyone with knowledge of an act of sexual misconduct by the clergy, religious and lay staff to tell us immediately, so that we may take appropriate action to protect others and provide support to sexual abuse victims.

Individuals who wish to report an allegation may do so by calling the Child and Youth Protection. 201-407-3256, Fax: 973-497-4001. Or In person, 171 Clifton Avenue. Newark, NJ 07104.





# FALSE FREEDOM OF CULTURE OF DEATH By Richard M. Doerflinger

In his 1995 encyclical letter *The Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae)*, Pope John Paul II sounded an alarm. In the midst of a culture that congratulates itself on being enlightened and progressive on matters of human rights, he said, we are very much in danger of giving in to a "culture of death." Modern debates on abortion and euthanasia are a symptom and leading edge of something more profound and insidious -- an entire view of the world that will lead us to forsake our ideals of human dignity and equality and "revert to a state of barbarism" (EV 14). What could the Holy Father have meant by that? What is the evidence that some kind of consistent ideology is taking hold of our aspirations for human progress and tainting the discussion of very different issues affecting human life? And what kind of challenge does this pose to us as supporters of social justice, and as believers?

## Two challenges:

For some answers let us consider recent developments on two issues that at first glance may seem quite different: human embryo research and assisted suicide. These appear different not only because they deal with opposite ends of life's spectrum, but also because they involve very different claims. With human embryo research, the question that seems to need answering is: Is this really "human life" at all? Even if we can all agree to respect human life, isn't this little product of conception really just a conglomerate of a few cells, too undeveloped to have human status? Can the uncertain status of this entity really outweigh the needs of many persons for the life-saving treatments that embryo research may provide? At the other end of the spectrum, we seem to have almost the opposite argument. Sick and elderly people, it is argued, are full-fledged persons whose rights do matter. These are the very people whose need for treatments (for Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease, for example) outweighs the merely "potential" interests of the embryo. And because they are persons who deserve respect, goes the argument, their wishes regarding how to end life deserve our respect and even our assistance. The two issues seem to have little in common. But we need to look more closely. When being human is not enough. The Human Embryo Research Panel, for example, endorsed a theory proposed by one of its own members, ethicist Ronald Green of Dartmouth College. Green favors what he calls (in the title of one of his articles) "a Copernican revolution in our thinking about life's beginning and life's end." It is time to realize, he says, that there is nothing "out there" to answer life-and-death questions for us. In short, there is nothing inherent in any human being that requires us to respect him or her as a person. Any decision to recognize a human being's rights as a "person" is a social convention, based on an enlightened self-interest: By denying "personhood" to this being so it can be subjected to deadly experiments, can we benefit people like ourselves without undermining society's willingness to view us as "persons"?

## A false freedom:

What about those sick and elderly people who can no longer be kept active and healthy, even with the help of cells stolen from embryos? If they want to end their suffering through assisted suicide, isn't it respect for their personhood and autonomy that drives our society's efforts to grant them their wish? Perhaps not. For if autonomy is really the issue, why do we not respect every suicidal person's wish for death? Regardless of health condition or life expectancy, there are always people who wish to die, for reasons that seem compelling to them. Many of these people undergo great suffering -- suffering that is comparable to the pain of terminal illness, may afflict them for a much longer time, and is less amenable to treatment by drugs like morphine. Most of them are clinically depressed -- but then, so are most suicidal people with terminal illness. Why continue to insist on suicide prevention for all these other people, as "right to die" groups do, while offering suicide assistance to the terminally ill?

## Freedom its own enemy:

The Holy Father has spoken of freedom owing a debt to life and truth. "Freedom negates and destroys itself, and becomes a factor leading to the destruction of others," he says, "when it no longer recognizes and respects its essential link with the truth" (EV 19). Similarly, when freedom forgets its roots in absolute respect for the life of every human person, it takes on "a perverse and evil significance: that of an absolute power over others and against others" (EV 20). In both areas, freedom and progress are turned on their heads, so that fellow human beings are stripped of their rights and cast aside as disposable objects. Paradoxically, a society dedicated to such rootless freedom, to such selfish and elitist progress, "is transformed into a tyrant State, which arrogates to itself the right to dispose of the life of the weakest and most defenseless members, from the unborn child to the elderly, in the name of a public interest which is really nothing but the interest of one part" (EV 20).

## An Alternative Vision

What is the alternative to this culture, in which the strong redefine and exploit the lives of the weak to build their new society? We can begin with a clear-minded recognition of the givenness of human life. We can accept the human condition, and the fact that we are all thrown together in that condition to respect and care for each other. This requires a certain humility, a realization that we are not in control of human life. (That, of course, is the real Copernican revolution: Copernicus showed his contemporaries that they were not at the center of the universe, but were revolving around the sun. We are not gods with the power to determine the meaning of good and evil and personhood for ourselves.) This is not only a religious believer's insight. In answer to the question, "Whose life is it anyway?", we can answer that a human life is simply not the kind of thing we can own. My life is not just one possession among others -- it is me, in my bodily reality. And if I can be owned, even by myself, I can be bought and sold -- and then I am a mere object. Human life must have inherent dignity, and be treated with the utmost respect, if any human rights are to have meaning. That is a consistent "natural law" position on respect for life. But as Pope John Paul II reminds us, how much more can we say as people of faith! To us, life is not just a "given" -- it is our first and most basic gift, from a Creator who loves us with an unsurpassable love. "Respect" is too grudging a word for the attitude Christians should have toward human life. We have reverence for life, and a sense of awesome responsibility for the precious gift over which we have been given stewardship. In the end, facts and arguments alone will not save us from a culture of death -- though God knows we need those as well. What will save us is love -- a love that is our dim reflection of the infinite love that brought us all into being. Mr. Doerflinger is Associate Director for Policy Development, [Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities](#), National Conference of Catholic Bishops