



## 28<sup>th</sup> June 2011 – Position Paper on: **Right to Life**

### **Introduction**

The Association Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII is an international faith-based Non Governmental Organization recognized by the Pontifical Right, and accredited to ECOSOC in 2006 with a Special Consultative Status. Present in 27 countries and on five continents, the members of the Association share directly their lives with the least in society, and are committed to removing the causes of injustice, poverty and marginalisation worldwide.

The Association is on the forefront in the promotion of the rights of children in a comprehensive approach: family, education, life, and health.

This paper reflects the position of the Association Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII on the above-mentioned matters.

### **Right to Life**

The Preamble of the Convention of the Rights of the Child reads:

*Bearing in mind that, as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, “the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth”.*

Article 6.1 of the same Convention reads:

*States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.*

Biologically, conception marks the beginning of every human life, a child that, from the embryonic stage, if not voluntarily suppressed, grows spontaneously up to adulthood, developing in continuity through the antenatal and the postnatal phases. The antenatal phase is the most exposed to discrimination related to sex-status, disabilities (real or supposed), and social condition of the family. In fact, abortion is the cause of the death of 45 millions individuals, a majority of them female.

In vitro artificial fertilization, with extracorporeal insemination, produces a huge number of human beings, of which only a few are settled in a uterus. The others are or frozen for an hypothetical next use, or eliminated because they are considered sickly or in surplus. Very few of them manage to be born. Worldwide, there are at least one million human embryos subjected to the inhuman practice of freezing, a condition of absolute vulnerability. They are children, children without parental care. It is necessary to take care of them. Part of the frozen human embryos are abandoned, and they are exposed to manipulation, exploitation, and destruction.

The Association Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII has the following goals:

- xxii** Promotion of and awareness for a culture aiming at recognizing the dignity of every human being, and welcoming life from conception to death, even in cases of serious illness or disease, malformation, and/or difficult motherhood;
- xxii** Advocacy campaigns aimed at convincing States to protect the right to life and support parents in order to allow them to welcome and raise their children in respectable conditions;
- xxii** Direct support of pregnant women in need through a friendly and material approach that can contemplate, if necessary, the welcoming in home families such as those promoted by APG23;

- xxiii** Welcome of abandoned newborn children – even affected by serious pathologies – in home families and in foster families;
- xxiii** Training on natural methods for controlling human fertility and promotion of projects of education on sexuality and affectivity in schools and groups;
- xxiii** Promotion of burial of miscarried or aborted fetuses supporting those parents who desire it.

On the right to life, APG23 recommends the followings:

- xxiii** Recognizing and implementing the right to life from conception to death;
- xxiii** Protecting every human being from abortion, even supporting parents in their right/duty to welcome and raise children in respectable conditions;
- xxiii** Guaranteeing adequate care and protection of the rights of pregnant women in order to preserve their health and life, including the health and life of their children, in particular during delivery and/or when health-complications or pathologies that affect the child or the woman occur;
- xxiii** Utilising antenatal diagnostic screening with the only aim at predisposing, if necessary, treatment for the survival and the health of the child;
- xxiii** Respecting human dignity by enabling only natural conception, and not in vitro fertilization;
- xxiii** Protecting laboratory-created human embryos from destructive testing, eugenics selection, freezing procedure, and destruction;
- xxiii** Protecting human embryos from abortive contraception;
- xxiii** Offering a life-opportunity to frozen human embryos, even encouraging natural parents to welcome them. Priority should be given to frozen embryos with the highest risk to be destroyed due to a long period of freezing or due to their health status;
- xxiii** Providing for specific programmes to support and orientate pregnant underage women in order to create the best conditions for welcoming a child;

- xxii** Adequately supporting parents of children with illness, disease, and disabilities both before and after birth;
- xxiii** Guaranteeing the respect of mortal remains of every child who died before his/her time;
- xxiii** Finally, protecting every pregnant women, in particular those underage, from constrained or induced abortion.

The Association Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII is fully aware of the controversial international debate on the issue of abortion and right to life, but it is convinced that since human rights are universal, indivisible, inalienable and interdependent, the international community should find ways of promoting and protecting the rights of women without violating the rights of children.