

# Catechism blends tradition, modern issues

## Offers teaching on war, violence and sexuality

By Agostino Bono  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The newly published universal catechism mixes traditional Catholic views of sex with updated applications of principles on violence.

War and capital punishment are reluctantly accepted as last resorts, genocide is considered a mortal sin, and "blind obedience" cannot be used to justify participation in war crimes.

Committing suicide, according to the catechism, does not automatically condemn a person.

Sex outside of marriage, common-law unions, artificial birth control, homosexual acts and masturbation are opposed. Sterilization is allowed only for therapeutic reasons.

On other contemporary issues, abortion and euthanasia are opposed, and genetic engineering is not permissible as a method of predetermining the sex and other specific characteristics of unborn babies.

The 581-page French-language text was published Nov. 16. Translations in other languages are planned during the coming months.

The new catechism is an exhaustive

collection of existing church teachings. It was written by a papally appointed commission to help bishops develop local catechisms.

"Every citizen and government must work to avoid wars," says the catechism. If peaceful methods fail, a nation can use military means in self-defense, but a strict "just war" criteria must be followed.

The catechism lists the criteria as:

- "The damage inflicted by the aggressor to the nation or community of nations is lasting, grave and ascertainable."

- All other means to stop the aggression "have proven to be impractical or inefficient."

- The defensive military action has a significant chance of succeeding.

- "The arms used do not cause evils and disorders worse than the evil to be eliminated. The power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in assessing this condition."

"Blind obedience is not enough to excuse" people from committing war crimes, the catechism says.

Genocide and other actions and orders "against the rights of people and their universal principles" is the catechism's definition of war crimes.

Genocide "must be condemned as a mortal sin," it says. "One is morally bound to resist orders to commit genocide."

Nations have the right to require military service of their citizens but must also respect conscientious objectors willing to perform alternative service, it says.

The catechism asks strict controls on arms trade and expresses "severe moral reservations" about the stockpiling of weapons as deterrents to aggression.

"The arms race does not guarantee peace. Far from eliminating the causes of war, it risks aggravating them," it says.

Regarding capital punishment, the catechism says governments have the right to inflict penalties in keeping with crimes, and this can include the death penalty "in cases of extreme gravity."

If methods short of capital punishment "suffice to defend human lives against aggressors and protect public order and the security of people, authorities should use these means because they better conform to the concrete conditions of the common good and to the dignity of the human person," it says.

Regarding suicide, the document acknowledges that external and mental factors can lessen a person's moral guilt.

"Serious psychic troubles, anxiety or a deep-seated fear of an ordeal, suffering or torture may make someone intending suicide less responsible for his action," it says.

"Eternal salvation for people who have killed themselves should not be despaired of. God can grant them the chance for salvific repentance, by ways known to him alone. The church prays for people who have made an attempt on their own life," it adds.

In the field of bioethics, the catechism opposes non-therapeutic genetic engineering "intended for the production of selected human beings according to sex or other pre-established criteria."

This goes against human dignity and violates the "unique, unrepeatable identity" of the human person, it says.

The catechism opposes producing human embryos for experimentation, but says that prenatal diagnosis and surgery on embryos is valid if they "respect the life and integrity of the embryo."

The indissolubility of marriage and opposition to artificial birth control are reiterated.

"Adultery and divorce, polygamy and common-law unions are grave offenses to the dignity of marriage," it says.

Although separation and civil divorce may be tolerated to solve practical problems, the couple remains married in the eyes of the church.

"The separation of spouses maintaining the matrimonial bond may be legitimate in certain cases," it says.

"If civil divorce is the only possible

means to ensure certain legitimate rights, such as the care of children or the safeguarding of property, it may be tolerated without constituting a moral fault," it says.

However, remarried Catholics whose first spouses are still alive have only limited participation in church life.

"They are not cut off from the church, but they may not have access to Communion. The main way they may lead a Christian life is to bring up their children in the faith," it adds.

The catechism says it is legitimate for parents to want to space their children, but they must do this by periodically abstaining from sex or through natural means based on the woman's fertility cycle.

"The legitimacy of intentions of the spouses does not justify recourse to morally unacceptable means, such as direct sterilization or contraception," it says.

The catechism condemns artificial insemination, donation of sperm or egg, and loaning of the uterus.

Artificial insemination techniques "practiced by the couple themselves ... are perhaps less worthy of condemnation, but they remain morally unacceptable," it says.

Married couples can enjoy sex because God wanted it to be "a source of joy and pleasure," it adds.

"Nevertheless, spouses must know how to remain within the limits of a proper moderation," it says.

Homosexual acts are wrong but homosexuals "must be welcomed with respect, compassion and sensitivity," it says. "All types of unjust discrimination against them should be avoided," it says.

Catholic opposition is based on the Bible, where homosexual acts are "presented as grave deprivations," it says. The catechism notes that homosexual tendencies are a major trial for many people.

"Homosexual people are called to chastity" and should seek strength through the grace of the sacraments, it adds.

## Finger Lakes Services

---


**AUBURN**

"WE MAKE FURNITURE LIVE AGAIN"  
**Auburn Furniture Service**  
Antique Restoration  
CANING-RUSHING & WICKER SUPPLIES  
REFINISHING PRODUCTS  
REPRODUCTION HARDWARE

79 COLUMBUS ST. AUBURN, N.Y. 13021  
PHONE 315 253-8752  
GEN-WEST BUSINESS CENTER 1-800-427-3839

---

**PHELPS**

  
**Robert M. Quigley**  
Attorney at Law

11 Church Street  
Phelps, NY 14532  
Civil Litigation Tel (315) 548-9566  
Wills Fax (315) 548-9590  
General Practice

Douglas C. Meeson Robert E. Vay

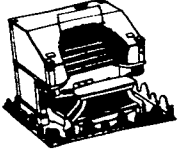
"Our Family Serving Your Family For Over 65 Years"

## Vay-Schleich & Meeson

### Funeral Home, Inc.

2692 Dewey Avenue
663-2100
1075 Long Pond Road

## The Rochester Theater



Organ  
Society

"Dedicated to preserving the sound of the 'King of Instruments'"

Presents:

**RON RHODE**  
Saturday, December 5th  
8:15 pm  
**AT THE AUDITORIUM CENTER**  
875 Main St. East  
Special Discount for Senior  
Citizen Groups of 10 or More

**50¢ OFF**

This ad entitles single-ticket buyers to 50¢ off the \$5.50 purchase price by presenting this ad at the box office the evening of the concert.

For further information, call  
R.T.O.S. at 544-6595

## FUNERAL DIRECTORS OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

The funeral Directors listed herein offer pre-need and at-need services and counseling in accordance with the Catholic faith.

<p><b>GATES</b></p> <p><b>Alvah Halloran &amp; Son, Inc.</b> Funeral Home H. Daniel Halloran 2125 Chili Avenue Rochester, N.Y. 14624 (716) 247-7590</p>	<p><b>DiPonzio Funeral Home, Inc.</b> (Across from St. Theodore's Church) 419 Spencerport Road Rochester, N.Y. 14606 429-6700</p>	<p><b>GREECE</b></p> <p><b>Arndt Funeral Home</b> 1118 Long Pond Rd. (south of Maiden Lane) Parking for over 100 cars Greece, N.Y. 14626 Ronald John Arndt (716) 225-6350</p>	<p><b>Vay-Schleich and Meeson Funeral Home Inc.</b> "Greece's Largest and Most Complete Facilities" 2692 Dewey Avenue 1075 Long Pond Rd. (716) 663-2100</p>
<p><b>IRONDEQUOIT</b></p> <p><b>Schauman-Sulewski Funeral Home Inc.</b> Edwin Sulewski 2100 St. Paul Street Rochester, N.Y. 14621 (716) 342-3400</p>	<p><b>Michael R. Yackiw Funeral Home</b> 1270 Norton Street Rochester, N.Y. 14621 (716) 544-5000</p>	<p><b>ROCHESTER</b></p> <p><b>Crawford Funeral Home, Inc.</b> "Our Family Serving Your Family" Located at 495 N. Winton Rd. (Between Atlantic &amp; Humboldt) (716) 482-0400</p>	<p><b>Lucey Funeral Home, Inc.</b> 301 W. Main St. Victor, N.Y. 924-5730 2309 Culver Rd. 342-0470 Michael W. Lucey Lic. Mgr.</p>

**MONUMENTS**

## HART MONUMENT CO.

2301 Dewey Avenue Since 1856 865-6746  
Opposite Holy Sepulchre Cemetery