

Day for Life 31 May 2010

Dear Father,

Each year the Bishops' Conferences of Scotland, Ireland and England and Wales mark a "Day for Life" choosing a common theme for reflection. This year we focus on end-of-life issues so as to help the faithful understand and appreciate the best traditions of the Church in this area.

In a year in which the Holy Father is to beatify Cardinal John Henry Newman we can do no better than look at his beautiful description in the *Dream of Gerontius* of the death of the faithful Christian, "fortified by the rites of Holy Church" and surrounded by the love and support of family and friends.

This is a very different experience of death to that considered by some in modern society as an exit from this world to be completed at a time of one's own choosing, a dangerous approach exemplified by the *End of Life (Scotland) Bill* currently being considered by the Scottish Parliament.

As the accompanying leaflets state: "Human death is not only a physical and psychological process, it is also a spiritual reality." These materials have been carefully prepared to help our people better confront the mystery of Christian death and understand the Christian tradition of care for the dying. Please ensure they are distributed to all families in your parish on Saturday/Sunday May 29-30, the weekend closest to the Day for Life itself, which falls each year of the Feast of the Visitation, May 31.

Please bring these themes to the attention of your people at Masses on that weekend and include appropriate petitions for the dying and those who care for them in the prayers of the faithful.

A second collection should be taken up, the proceeds of which will be divided between the Linacre Centre which serves the three Bishops' Conferences of these islands in the area of bioethical research and local agencies in Scotland which are involved in care for the dying.

I thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours devotedly in Christ,

+Mario Conti

Archbishop of Glasgow on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland.