

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS REFERENCE FILE

KofC George Getek Memorial Pro-Life Scholarship Program 2025-2026

Should abortion be legal?

This is the question that *Live Action*'s Lila Rose recently [debated](#) with George Washington University pro-abortion lawyer, Dr. Mary Anne Franks, a Harvard law graduate with an Oxford Ph.D. In Rose's 2/15/2025 email, *A few tools for your pro-life debates*, she relayed the following: "Dr. Franks and I engaged in a spirited discussion on whether abortion should be legal and its profound moral implications. She presented her arguments with the polished sophistication you'd expect from a law professor, but her claims ultimately rested on the same old pro-abortion talking points—ones you've likely heard in your own conversations as you fight for life. I want to equip you with clear responses to three key arguments Dr. Franks raised during our debate—arguments you may encounter in your own conversations with friends and family:

Claim 1: "Abortion is self-defense."

Dr. Franks argued that abortion is justified on the same grounds as self-defense and private property rights. She used three words to make her case: unlawful, intrusion, and reasonable. Ironically, these terms dismantle her own argument.

- Unlawful? A child in the womb is not an aggressor. The preborn baby has committed no crime, broken no law, and did not choose to be there. In fact, the womb is exactly where a child is supposed to be.

- Intrusion? A baby is not a trespasser. Pregnancy is not an "invasion"—it is the natural outcome of human reproduction, and the womb is designed to nurture and sustain life.

- Reasonable? Even in complicated pregnancies, the natural risks of pregnancy do not equate to an imminent, direct threat that justifies the deliberate killing of an innocent child. Just as we cannot preemptively run drivers off the road because they might cause us harm, we cannot justify killing a child simply because pregnancy carries risks.

Claim 2: "Bodily autonomy justifies abortion."

Yes, we all have bodily autonomy—but that autonomy does not give us the right to harm or kill others who merely exist. This is the core flaw in the pro-abortion argument.

Dr. Franks went so far as to claim that "sometimes, innocent people will have to die" because no one has a right to life that depends on another person's body. This is chilling. It's the same logic that has justified history's greatest atrocities—denying rights to the most vulnerable because of their dependency. The truth is that every human being begins life in total dependence. Infants, the elderly, and disabled people all rely on others to survive. Does this make their lives expendable? Of course not. Parents have a natural responsibility to care for their children—born and preborn. To deny this is to deny the fundamental bonds of human civilization.

Claim 3: "Truth is subjective."

Dr. Franks made an astonishing claim during our debate: 'There is no persistent, transcendent truth out there that is simply true all the time, at all places, no matter what

the context.' This is the heart of the pro-abortion worldview: *moral relativism*. But this idea collapses under its own weight. If there is no truth, then her claim isn't true either. Reality is not subjective. The humanity of the preborn child is not a matter of personal belief—it is an objective, biological fact. And history has shown us that whenever society denies the personhood of an entire class of human beings, it leads to unimaginable cruelty. Just as past injustices—like slavery and the Holocaust—were “justified” by dehumanizing victims, abortion hinges on the same dangerous lie. But truth does not change based on convenience. The preborn child is a human person, entitled to the same rights as you and me.

I hope these points strengthen your pro-life advocacy. At *Live Action*, we are committed to equipping you with the tools to defend life boldly and effectively. Our [Pro-Life Replies](#) video series is a powerful resource that breaks down more of the common pro-abortion arguments with clear, compelling truth. Check it out at prolifereplies.liveaction.org, and share it with your friends and family. The more people who hear the truth, the more hearts and minds will change—and lives will be saved.”

Various Pro-Life Topics (and sample Catholic References)

- The preeminence of the Right to Life [VA Bishops Pre-election Letter September 2025](#)
- Motherhood ("[Made for This: The Catholic Mom's Guide to Birth](#)" by Mary Haseltine", [More Resources for Catholic Family Living](#))
- Fatherhood (CCC 2214; Pope St. JP II, [Familiaris Consortio \(1981\), no. 25](#); Pope Francis, [General Audience \(February 4, 2015\), The family - 3. The father \(Second part\): On Fatherhood and "Healthy Masculinity"](#) by Stephen P. White in The Catholic Thing))
- Babies/newborns ("[Order for the Blessing of Parents Before Childbirth](#)" (USCCB), "[Blessed is the Fruit of Thy Womb: Rosary Reflections on Miscarriage, Stillbirth, and Infant Loss](#)" by Ginny Kochis)
- Joys of childhood ("[Raising Pro-Life Kids in a Post-Roe World](#)" (National Catholic Register), "[Putting Children and Families First](#)" (USCCB))
- Opportunities the children who are born will have ("[Parents and Parenting](#)" (USCCB), [Why Children Need Married Parents \(USCCB\)](#))
- Special needs kids ([Accepting the Gift Ministry for Catholic Special Needs Parents, God chose you to raise your neurodivergent child, Catholic Coalition for Special Ed](#))
- God's love (CCC 1, 356-357; "[The Privilege of Being a Woman](#)" by Alice von Hildebrand)
- God created you for a purpose ("[Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting](#)" by Laura Kelly Fanucci, "[Mulieris Dignitatem](#) (The Dignity and Vocation of Women)" by St. John Paul II)
- God loves all His children especially those in the womb ("[Prayer For Babies in Their Mother's Womb](#)" (EWTN), "[Donum Vitae](#)" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith))
- All babies are God's gift ("[A Newborn Child is God's Gift to the Entire Family](#)" by National Catholic Register, "[God's Greatest Gift](#)" by Catholic Mom, "[Children: A Gift from God that Opens Up the Future](#)", "[Nursery of Heaven](#)" by Cassie Everts)

- Pregnancy is God's gift ("[Why Pregnancy is a Mega-Gift](#)" (National Catholic Register), "[Theology of the Body](#)" by St. John Paul II)
- Solidarity with pregnant moms and their children ([Bishop Burbidge](#)), such as [Gabriel Project](#) which helps pregnant women with long or short-term needs and [Project Rachel](#) which is a post-abortive healing ministry.
- Increased support for pregnant and parenting mothers in need, such as in difficult circumstances through [Walking With Moms In Need](#), [Mary's Shelter](#)
- Joys of adoption ([Bishop Burbidge on Adoption](#), [USCCB](#)) and Catholic organizations for adoption ([Catholic Charities](#), [Catholic Adoption Online](#))
- Expanding your pro-life sphere of influence. Review the section, "*Opportunities to expand your pro-life spheres of influence*" in this document. Find an organization or two that interests you and describe what stood out to you about it/them and why.

Various Pro-life Subjects (and sample Catholic References)

- Right to Life ([CCC 2270](#), [Evangelium Vitae](#) (The Gospel of Life) by Pope St. John Paul II, [Respect Life](#) by Bishop Burbidge)
- Opposition to the Extreme Abortion Amendment to the Virginia Constitution ("Right to Reproductive Freedom Amendment") [Bishop Michael F. Burbidge's Statement on Respect Life Month - Catholic Diocese of Arlington](#), 9/29/2025
- Opposition to abortion ([CCC 2270-2275](#), [Bishop Burbidge](#)) and opposition to chemical abortion ([Abortion Pills: The Basics](#) | [Understanding Abortion Pills: Q&A on Chemical Abortion](#) from USCCB)
- Opposition to infanticide ([CCC 2258](#), [Ex 20:13](#), [Lev 18:21](#), [Mt 2:16-18](#)),
- Opposition to capital punishment ([CCC 2267](#)), [Bishop Burbidge](#)
- Opposition to euthanasia ([CCC 2276-2279](#))
- Opposition to assisted suicide (([CCC 2280-2283](#)), [Bishop Burbidge's Walk Humbly Podcast #126](#))
- Compare and contrast direct right to life violations ([CCC 2258](#)) of abortion, infanticide, suicide, euthanasia, assisted suicide and capital punishment
- End-of-life issues and challenges ([Finish Life Faithfully](#) from Catholic Herald, [Medical Dilemmas and Moral Decision-Making Q&A Guide](#) from Arlington Diocese)
- Support for chastity ([CCC 2337-2359](#), [Jason Evert on Catholic Chastity](#))
- Support for NFP and Opposition to contraception ([Bishop Burbidge's Statement on Natural Family Planning](#)), [Humanae Vitae](#), ([CCC 2370](#), [2399](#))
- Opposition to In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) ([Bishop Burbidge's Pastoral Letter on IVF](#))
- Compare and contrast NFP, contraception, and IVF and embryonic children
- Opposition to human trafficking ([CCC 2414](#), [The Real Price of Human Trafficking](#) by Edify)
- Opposition to gender ideology ([A Catechesis on the Human Person and Gender Ideology](#) by Bishop Burbidge, [A Catholic Approach to Gender Dysphoria](#) by Jason Evert at 37:53)

- Support for intellectually disabled ([*Ecclesia in America*](#) by Pope John Paul II; [CCC 1700](#); [Sensory Mass” for Neurodiverse at Nativity Church](#) by EWTN; [Special Religious Development \(SPRED\) at Nativity](#))
- Support for immigration reform to uphold the Church’s teaching on the dignity of all people while also upholding the Church’s teaching that every country has the right and the responsibility “to promote public order, safety, and security through well-regulated borders and just limits on immigration.” ([*A Pastoral Statement on American Immigration Law and the Catholic Imperative of Upholding Human Dignity and the Common Good*](#)) by Bishop Burbidge; issue of [Deportation](#) by Catholic Answers
- Some examples of related right-to-life topics that could be compared are: Direct *Right to Life* Violations ([CCC 2258](#)): abortion vs. capital punishment vs. euthanasia, or Euthanasia vs assisted suicide
- Expanding your pro-life spheres of influence. Review the section, “*Opportunities to expand your pro-life spheres of influence*” in this document. Find an organization or two that interests you and describe what stood out to you about it/them and why.

Opportunities to expand your pro-life spheres of influence

Some opportunities to expand your pro-life knowledge and spheres of influence include:

(1) *Individual experiences/opportunities* – The Catholic Church (e.g., Bishop Burbidge’s letters on abortion and the preeminence of the Right to Life issue, gender ideology, IVF); online resources (like *Live Action*, *Students for Life*, *Sisters of Life*, *Life News*, *LifeSite News*, *Catholic Vote*, *The Family Foundation*, *Virginia Society of Human Life*, etc); local resources (like Catholic Charities’ [pregnancy and adoption services](#), options/resources like [Gabriel Project](#) and about twenty [Pregnancy Resource Centers](#), [Adoption Services](#), and [Project Rachel](#) regarding hope after abortion); pro-life books (like *Why We’re Pro-Life* booklets, *What To Say When*, *Persuasive Pro-Life*, etc); [Tough Topics](#), and pro-life apologetics (*Catholic Answers*, *Students for Life*, *Life Training Institute*, *EWTN*, *Equal Rights Institute*, *40 Days for Life*), etc.

(2) *Local Organizations and Community* – Pregnancy Resource Centers (like *Tepeyac/Divine Mercy Care*, *A Woman’s Choice*, *A Best Choice Ultrasound Mobile Unit*, *Gabriel Project*, *Catholic Charities*, *Mary’s Comfort*, *MaRiH Center*, etc); parish/ community pro-life activities, donations; participating for an hour or more in a *40 Days for Life* campaign like *Nativity’s All-Day Prayer Vigil for Life*, etc. (You CAN make a difference. *40 Days for Life* indicates: “former abortion workers report that when someone prays in front of an abortion facility, the “no-show” rate for abortion appointments can go to as high as 75 percent.)

(3) *Broader Community* – The *National March for Life* in Washington, DC, the *Virginia March for Life* in Richmond, and/or involvement in other state/national pro-life organizations (like *Students for Life*, *Live Action*, *vaCatholic.org*, *Sisters of Life*, *Life News*, *LifeSite News*, *Catholic Vote*, *Virginia Society of Human Life*, etc).

Hints to “The Good, the True, and the Beautiful” regarding Bishop Burbidge’s Statement on Respect Life Month

You may discuss one or more things mentioned by the bishop such as the innocence of the unborn child, concern and caring for others in a non-judgmental manner, the need and duty to protect the lives of the unborn and vulnerable women, how that protection would be destroyed by the passing of the proposed amendment to Virginia’s constitution, and for those eligible to vote, our duty to protect life is “paramount” and “above all else” in our voting decisions.

The [Catechism of the Catholic Church \(CCC\), paragraph 41](#) states: “*All creatures bear a certain resemblance to God, most especially man, created in the image and likeness of God. The manifold perfections of creatures—their truth, their goodness, their beauty—all reflect the infinite perfection of God.*” For example, the *good* relates to morality and acts of mercy in line with God’s will; the *true* relates to reliable knowledge of God’s creation like a scientific fact; and the *beautiful* relates to the senses and the awe of God and his creation, like the smile of a newborn baby, an inspiring song or a view of nature.

The Ten Reasons to Oppose the Extreme Abortion “Reproductive Freedom” Amendment to the Virginia Constitution

(1) It doesn’t follow the science: An unborn child (zygote/fetus/embryo) is not “Tissue” but a living human being with a right to life. Even Roe recognized a state interest in protecting the unborn life later in pregnancy. The child figures not at all in this amendment.

(2) Parental consent laws will be eliminated. The amendment says “every individual” not every adult so it means minors can act without the “burden” of parental involvement.

(3) Allows for late-term abortion on demand even weakening Virginia’s current regulation of third trimester abortions.

(4) The General Assembly shall be unable to pass health and safety standards for the health and well-being of women.

(5) The General Assembly shall be unable to ensure by statute that abortions must be performed by physicians.

(6) There are no protections for conscience rights or religious liberty objections. Will medical providers be coerced into acting against their deeply held beliefs?

(7) This amendment will force taxpayers to fund abortion.

(8) The vague, undefined language of “reproductive freedom” will include whatever a court says it does, foreseeably including abortion, contraception, sterilization and so-called “sex-change” operations—even for minors.

(9) Enactment of this amendment places women and girls at risk, turns Virginia into the abortion capital of the South and potentially shields even sex-traffickers.

(10) This amendment is too extreme and not in step with the values of most Virginians.