

RESPECT LIFE HOLY HOUR REFLECTION FOR SEPTEMBER, 2024: OUR IDENTITY AS CREATURES MADE IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD, IE. CREATURES MADE FOR COMMUNION WITH GOD AND THROUGH GOD, WITH ONE ANOTHER!

THE AMENDMENT TO THE MARYLAND CONSTITUTION STATES:

“That every person, as a central component of an individual’s rights to liberty and equality, has the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including but NOT LIMITED TO the ability to make and effectuate decisions to prevent, continue, or end one’s own pregnancy. The state may not, directly or indirectly, deny, BURDEN, or abridge the right unless justified by a compelling state interest achieved by the least restrictive means.”

Above is the proposed Maryland Constitutional Amendment. The language that will appear on the ballot will be slightly different. (See the last page.)

Leader: This November Marylanders will be asked to consider an amendment to the State Constitution. The language is very vague and ambiguous. Let us pray that, while reflecting on the amendment during Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament or Jesus in the Tabernacle, we may comprehend its true meaning and significance.

Let us begin by reflecting silently on the following verses which will help shape our understanding of the human person. Continue at your own pace with the remainder of the reflections and questions. (State the amount of time that will be allocated for private reflection and prayer.)

Genesis 1: 27-28

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

Genesis 2:7

7 then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Note: Only during the creation of man does God breath into man’s nostrils “the breath of life” making us embodied souls created in the image and likeness of God?

Genesis 2:23-24.

23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

24 Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own;

20 you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

John 6:56

56 He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

Reflection 1: “That every person, as a central component of an individual’s rights to liberty and equality, has *the fundamental right to reproductive freedom*,”

Question 1: What is the source of our identity and dignity as human persons? Are our bodies ours alone to do with what we want? What happens when we do things “our way” and forget or deny our true identity and higher calling?

Question 2: What is the meaning of “reproductive freedom” in the amendment? Does freedom mean doing whatever we want?

Question 3: Is reproductive freedom truly a “central component” to a person’s right to liberty and equality? What about other physical components of our bodies? Are they equally central to our right to liberty and equality?

Question 4: When a woman and man become one flesh (Genesis 2:23-24), who has the “fundamental right” over their “one flesh” and the new life they might beget with that “one flesh”?

Notes:

Reflection 2: *That every person, as a central component of an individual’s rights to liberty and equality, has the fundamental right to reproductive freedom...*

Question 1: Is a child in the womb a person? If so, doesn’t that child’s personhood give it the fundamental right to reproductive freedom as well as to other rights, such as the right to life? If a child in the womb is not considered a “person”, when does that child become a person with acknowledged rights? Who has the authority to decide when personhood begins? From where or whom does that authority come?

Question 2. The family has long been the fundamental unit of society responsible for overseeing the raising, early education and socialization of their children. There is no age limit assigned to the individuals whose rights to liberty and equality are addressed in the amendment. What implications are there for the traditional rights and responsibilities parents have for raising their minor children? Could minor children sue their parents for not respecting their rights to reproductive freedom? Could the state charge parents with criminal behavior?

Notes:

Reflection 3: That every person, as a central component of an individual's rights to liberty and equality, has the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including but NOT LIMITED TO the ability to make and effectuate decisions to prevent, continue, or end one's own pregnancy.

Question 1. What other fundamental reproductive rights (other than the ability to make and effectuate decisions to prevent, continue or end one's own pregnancy) might be covered by the amendment, ie fall in the category of "NOT LIMITED TO"?

Question 2: Who will decide what other fundamental reproductive rights are covered by the amendment?

Question 3; Why are contraception and abortion the only reproductive rights specified in the amendment?

Notes:

Reflection 4: The state may not, directly or indirectly, deny, BURDEN, or abridge the right unless justified by a compelling state interest achieved by the least restrictive means.

Question 1: To what person, group of persons. institution or groups of institutions does the term "state" refer? And by what process will it make its decisions regarding this amendment? What is the difference between these rights addressed in this amendment and our federal rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

Notes:

Reflection 5: Should the amendment be approved, how might other human rights and “freedoms” be impacted?

Question 1: How might the freedom of conscience rights of people in the health care and medical profession be impacted should their consciences not let them perform or be involved in certain reproductive treatments and procedures?

Question 2: How might the religious freedom of schools, hospitals and other institutions be impacted should their guidelines or foundational principles be inconsistent with reproductive procedures and treatments that are allowed by this amendment?

Question 3: How might freedom of speech be impacted?

Question 4: How might a woman’s freedom to obtain information and medical assistance that will help her make an informed decision be impacted?

Notes:

THE BALLOT will say (not required to match amendment language):

Question 1 - Constitutional Amendment (Ch. 245 of the 2023 Legislative Session)

Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Freedom

The proposed amendment confirms an individual’s fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including but NOT LIMITED TO the ability to make and effectuate decisions to prevent, continue, or end the individual’s pregnancy, and provides the State may not, directly or indirectly, deny, burden, or abridge the right unless justified by a compelling State interest achieved by the least restrictive means.

For the Constitutional Amendment

Against the Constitutional Amendment