



April 17, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last week, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith released a declaration on human dignity entitled *Dignitas Infinita*. This statement of faith reminds us of the inherent God-given dignity of every human person while outlining challenges to safeguarding and reverencing that divine gift.

For me, this document furthers the Holy Father's call for the rebirth of "a universal aspiration to fraternity" by acknowledging and reverencing the dignity of every human person, every man and woman (*Cf. Fratelli Tutti*, 8). One need not struggle to see how our society can violate human dignity in a variety of ways – gender ideology, human trafficking, sexual abuse, abortion, euthanasia, surrogacy, mistreatment of people with disabilities, violence against women, and poverty. Pope Francis teaches that "the dignity of others is to be respected in all circumstances, not because that dignity is something we have invented or imagined, but because human beings possess an intrinsic worth superior to that of material objects and contingent situations. This requires that they be treated differently. That every human being possesses an inalienable dignity is a truth that corresponds to human nature apart from all cultural change (FT, 213)."

Inspired by the teaching of Pope Francis and driven by today's challenges, *Dignitas Infinita* draws on perennial Church teaching, clearly stating, "Even today, in the face of so many violations of human dignity that seriously threaten the future of the human family, the Church encourages the promotion of the dignity of every human person, regardless of their physical, mental, cultural, social, and religious characteristics (66)." The actions that protect human dignity and build up the human family begin when we honestly face the current problems and respond with mercy and compassion, when we embrace one another as brothers and sisters of the same Father who endowed us with dignity reflective of His own.

I invite you to read and reflect upon the inviolable dignity of the human person as you engage this document. This timely declaration provides a critical response to the certain difficulties facing us as individuals, within our families, in society at large as well as in the Church. May the Holy Spirit guide our work as we aspire to be one family, united in the Lord.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior
Bishop of Harrisburg