

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE is proud and honored to launch the *Verba Vitae* project in fellowship and collaboration with the **Institute of Lutheran Theology**. We are especially delighted to bring the Church and the world this inaugural issue and the fine scholarship its contributors and their reflections represent.

The Lutheran communion embodies a long and illustrious legacy of rigorous and responsible intellectual inquiry. We continue to take seriously our roots in the Judeo-Christian philosophical tradition, culminating in the person of Jesus Christ and the words of the Holy Scriptures. Our forebears have consciously drawn on the influence of Apostolic thought as well as the Western philosophical tradition as early as Augustine. The Lutheran Reformation began in a university setting and has delivered to us a culture of educated clergy and well-catechized laity. Lutherans continue to pursue theology as both a devotion and an academic discipline.

The sanctity of life is also coming of age. Over the course of the 20th and early 21st centuries, this outlook has developed the rational and scientific underpinnings to engage competing perspectives. Certain learned voices in our time have sadly taken up advocacy of death as a solution to suffering. Cultural conversation and practice are regrettably following their lead, even as a system supporting this thinking forms student minds, citizen consciences, and public expectations. We need not fear dialogue and even debate about these matters. Universal human dignity – no matter what size, skills, or circumstances – remains essential to our civilization and our witness. Contrary opinions provide us opportunities to discover and celebrate the blessings of being human together.

For 45 years, Lutherans For Life has been receiving each neighbor as a gift and privilege. Our board, staff, and nationwide network of volunteer communities have occupied ourselves with speaking the courage of God's truth and showing the compassion of Christ's love. This includes a range of professionals and experts in law and philosophy, medicine and policy, research and theology, economics, and activism. Our Scriptural convictions lend themselves admirably and amicably to all these enterprises. Now the time has come to amplify and advance an informed voice about the sanctity of every human life. We cannot rest content, allowing others to assert monopoly in the marketplace of ideas.

We believe that *Verba Vitae* is going to broaden the reach and deepen the case for human life. We hope this journal will also facilitate listening to counterparts, identifying common grounds, and building bridges toward convincing and cooperating. And we pray that the Lord our God, who has incarnated Himself human among us as the Truth and the Life, will bless its reception.

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