

# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN DIGNITY

## *Dignitatis Humanae Institute*

Promoting Human Dignity based on the recognition  
that Man is made in the Image and Likeness of God

10. CALLS ON ALL MEN OF GOODWILL to make explicit reference, always and everywhere, to the fact that the dignity of Man, and the state-conferred human rights that recognise this dignity, proceeds from the *image and likeness* of God which is within us; and therefore in believing Man is created in the *image and likeness* of God lies the only sure protection of Man's dignity (and correspondingly also his rights);
11. CALLS ON ALL MEN OF GOODWILL to make explicit reference, always and everywhere, to the unprecedented danger for a culture which accepts liberties as granted by the State because that which is the State's to give is also the State's to take away; whilst international charters may recognise certain rights arising out of human dignity, no-one should dare to presume that such charters can ever in themselves be the source of such rights;
12. CALLS ON ALL MEN OF GOODWILL to make explicit reference, always and everywhere, to the fact that recognition of 'fundamental human rights' in their fullest capacity demands the recognition of their source; that our true rights lie ineluctably beyond, and infinitely transcend, any charter, no matter how well-intentioned the attempt to codify them; and that the pre-eminent 'human right' is to have one's humanity recognised as being made in the image and likeness of God.



*Members of the Working Group on Human Dignity believe that man is made in the image and likeness of God.*

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### Benjamin Harnwell

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"We must rediscover the sacred respect for the human person. Man must never become the means to a utopian end: the wellbeing of Man is in itself the end. Subverting this basic truth is how the great totalitarian ideologies of the Twentieth century - International Socialism and National Socialism - wrought their evil. Their seductive temptations linger on: work done to promote human dignity is essential to the very survival of Civilisation itself."



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*"Recognition of 'fundamental human rights' in their fullest capacity demands the recognition of their source...the pre-eminent 'human right' is to have one's humanity recognised as being made in the image and likeness of God."*



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- *having regard* to the Charter of Liberties (1100),
- *having regard* to Magna Carta (1215),
- *having regard* to the Warsaw Confederation and Henrician Articles (1573)
- *having regard* to the Bill of Rights (1689),
- *having regard* to the five invocations to God in the United States Declaration of Independence (1776),
- *having regard* to the 'presence' and 'the auspices of the Supreme Being' invoked by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789),
- *having regard* to the United States Bill of Rights (1791),
- *having regard* to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948),
- *having regard* to the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948),
- *having regard* to the European Convention on Human Rights (1950),
- *having regard* to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965),
- *having regard* to the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966),
- *having regard* to the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966),
- *having regard* to the United Nations Convention Against Torture (1984),
- *having regard* to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1987),
- *having regard* to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989),
- *having regard* to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000),

- A. whereas the true nature of Man is that he is not an animal, but a human being made in the image and likeness of God, his Creator,
- B. whereas it is precisely the imago Dei that Man acknowledges within himself with such profound awe and respect to call human life sacred; and to which the moral sense testifies certain properties as being inalienable; indelible in every single human life from conception until natural death,
- C. whereas these properties have come to be known in the modern, secular state as 'fundamental human rights',
- D. whereas the most complete expression of human dignity is therefore to be found only in recognising Man's true anthropological and existential nature, and that this recognition lies at the foundation of all that the world calls civilisation,
- E. whereas in recognising Man's rights as intrinsic to his being, and not the product of legal charters is essential to sustaining liberty in a free society, work done to promote such a view of human dignity thereby promotes the foundation of all human rights,
- F. whereas it is impossible to deny the source of Man's transcendent dignity, and at the same time maintain that such dignity exists, yet the school of humanism tried to do just this, and with its inevitable failure, Man has been left in the precarious state of having no inherent rights other than those which the social community deigns to confer on him,
- G. whereas belief that the State is the source of our human rights might be called inauthentic human dignity,
- H. whereas that which is most sacred about Man is beyond human description because it comes from God – image and likeness – who is himself ineffable, and that international charters can only leave Man diminished by the attempt to literalise the ineffable,
- I. whereas these insights are needed to maintain the balance between the rights of the individual and the power of the State, and that therefore recognition of Man's dignity affects society's ability to organise itself in a virtuous way politically, so that this balance never crosses the tipping point,
- J. whereas the proper relationship between the individual and the State is that the latter exists to serve the former, not vice versa,
- K. whereas it is the recognition of the dignity of Man that is most lacking in our society, not rights, and that this imbalance must be redressed,
- L. whereas the mutuality of the parallel concepts of human rights and human dignity, and their interdependence, is definitively institutionalised in the Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world",
1. **SOLEMNLY PROPOSES** that people form their politics out of their most deeply-held principles and convictions;
  2. **PROFOUNDLY ACKNOWLEDGES** that a society which holds within the very deepest vault of its culture a belief that God's fullest revelation to Mankind was in the person of Jesus Christ; that he created all men equal, that the central commandment to his people was for them to love one another, that Man is the purposeful creation of a benevolent God; such will have a very different political praxis from one which believes Man to be an accidental and meaningless product of survival of the fittest; the exultation of the strong and the elimination of the weak, nature red in tooth and claw;
  3. **EMPHATICALLY BELIEVES** that although the Christian faith is the historic source of Man's political dignity, those who do not believe in God lose nothing when those who do articulate the basis for their own dignity;
  4. **DECISIVELY RECOGNISES** that this Declaration is not a vehicle for proselytism, yet there are many legislatures that include MPs who understand that Christianity is not inimical to the principal values cherished by society and that it is in fact the spiritual midwife of them;
  5. **EARNESTLY RECALLS** that such ideas as the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, universal suffrage, the rule of law and equality before the law are specifically manifestations of the Judaeo-Christian tradition; even if individual proponents of these causes were not consciously acting because of religious imperatives;
  6. **HUMBLY SUGGESTS** that as they are accepted today, these qualities have never evolved naturally in any non-Christian society;
  7. **URGENTLY NOTES** that failing to address the basis of the infinite value of each human life, legislatures around the world are currently engaged in a dangerous agenda based on a distorted understanding of the human person which is literally fatally flawed – the precepts upon which human rights are founded are being hollowed out and undermined; and that this agenda continues to corrupt Man's true nature, eroding the dignity of life and diminishing the humanity of Man;
  8. **RESOLUTELY DETERMINES** that the promotion of human dignity should not be misunderstood as a demonstration of exclusion or intolerance towards other religions, and that indeed, other religions exist around the world quite securely, and their influence in shaping their own cultural and political milieux can be readily discerned and observed;
  9. **REMAINS KEENLY AWARE** that Western Civilisation is a historical collection of countries with strong identities formed and influenced through the Christian Faith; and that it is only through the full, conscious and active participation of this Faith in the public square that recognition of the imago Dei can be most authentically nourished;

(cont.)