

## **Olivia Murray ...Age 14, Grade 8**

In 500 words or less, answer the following prompt: "What can I do now, and what would I like to do in the future, to promote a Culture of Life in our Country?"

As Catholics, we are called to adhere to the Fifth Commandment: You shall not kill. Although the commandment seems very broad, there is a lot more to the Fifth Commandment than just simply not committing murder. Abortion, euthanasia, suicide, and terrorism are all additional doings that violate the Fifth Commandment. Abortion, the direct termination of the life of an unborn baby, is murder. Sadly, this is a very controversial topic as people come up with reasons supporting abortion; however, the action is wrong, regardless of the circumstances. In some situations, abortion can become a form of euthanasia; mercy killing. We should never deliberately kill someone, even in cases of great suffering.

Our Catholic faith requires us to take ordinary measures to sustain life. Therefore, even if an unborn child has a condition most likely resulting in immediate death after exposure to life outside of the womb, we must give that baby the right to be born. The frightening and horrible action that entails taking one's own life, known as suicide, is also a violation of the Fifth Commandment. No matter what an individual is going through, suicide is an offense against God. Unfortunately, in today's day in age, people are treated horribly, so much so that it can drive oneself to think about taking his or her own life. People experiencing these thoughts need to get help. Taking one's own life is simply a form of weakness. Suicidal individuals face many hardships, but they must prove their Catholic identity by showing strength and overcoming adversity. Terrorism, the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims, is another violation of the Fifth Commandment. As many know, the unorthodox, unlawful and unChristian form of violence involves the killing of innocent people, committed by terrorists trying to prove a point or show their "power". Retaliation is not the way anyone should respond. As a matter of fact, Catholics must do just the opposite and combat hatred with love. This is the Christian way of dealing with issues, and as followers of God, this is the way we must act.

Respecting life is one of the most important things an individual must do. Obeying the Fifth Commandment, you shall not kill, is a major way of showing respect for life. The violations of this commandment include: abortion, euthanasia, suicide and terrorism. Committing any of these sins, can weaken our relationships with God severely; therefore, we must follow the Fifth Commandment and all of the rules that apply to it.