



American Idols

Uvalde & the culture of death

David Albertson

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Albertson define a culture of life and a culture of death? Do you agree with these definitions? Will a culture of life “only cost higher taxes and stronger gun regulations,” as Albertson says?

2. Does looking beyond “individual morality” to a broader discussion of systemic sin negate the responsibility of the individual? What does a focus on systemic sin highlight that could be missed by paying attention only to the individual?

3. How should the government respond to the problem of gun violence? Can Catholic thought inform this response?

4. How can we develop a “deep critical sense, capable of discerning true values and authentic needs”? Do you know someone who has this quality? How can we practice it? Are our schools, churches, families, universities, and communities doing enough to develop it?

5. In the past month, *Roe v. Wade* has been overturned and Biden has signed a gun-control bill into law. Do these decisions reflect progress toward a culture of life? Why or why not?

6. “You shall not kill,” is not just a “negative prohibition,” but a “positive duty to promote life to the maximum.” If you were to rewrite “You shall not kill” in positive terms, what would it say? What are other positive duties you can think of that promote life to the maximum?

7. Pope Francis suggests a “politics of ‘dreaming’ or Christian utopianism” to “embrace the entire horizon of the good.” Do some dreaming: What does your utopia look like? What policies would engender this utopia? What would have to change about our country and our culture to make this happen?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

David Albertson and Jason Blakely, “From Here to Utopia,” June 2021: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/here-utopia>

John Gehring, “Against the Culture of Death,” October 2017: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/against-culture-death>

David Bentley Hart, “Three Cheers for Socialism,” March 2020: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/three-cheers-socialism>

Mollie Wilson O’Reilly, “Nothing to Celebrate,” March 2013: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/nothing-celebrate>

The Editors, “Getting Used to It,” June 2022: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/getting-used-it>

Paul Lauritzen, “Holy Alliance?” March 2006: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/holy-alliance>