Mom, apple pie, America—and Catechetical Sunday!

By Ken Ogorek

At first glance, the theme for this year's Catechetical Sunday—"Safeguarding the Dignity of Every Human Person"—looks like it shouldn't have to be a theme. Who doesn't think that people have dignity? Why would we need to be reminded about safeguarding humanity? Human dignity is like Mom, apple pie and America: Who would be against it?

A closer look reveals why this theme is profoundly important. It's a matter of life or death.

Safeguarding

We guard things that are under attack. The messages that bombard us throughout many of our days speak against the dignity of every human person.

People are often treated as objects, as ways to achieve a desired goal. If you produce, if you consume, if you provide me with pleasure, then you have value. The small, the weak, the poor are nuisances to be ignored or eliminated.

Human dignity is under attack by way of undermining our confidence in God's deep love for each woman and man he's ever created and ever will.

Dignity

Respect and love don't have to be earned. You might not like every person you know. And some folks are certainly more admirable than others. But each person existed in the mind and heart of God before time as we know it began.

Once called into being by God, every human person will always exist. Though not eternal like God, each woman and man is an immortal being. Earthly life ends; at that point, eternal life begins. How awe-inspired we should be in the presence of every person we meet.

How deep must God's love for each human person be. What dignity each woman and man possesses simply because God took time to create her or him in his deep love. Sometimes we need to be reminded of that.

The human person

When catechetical textbook content largely from the 1970s and 1980s was examined in light of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, one doctrinal deficiency found was an inadequate presentation of what it means to be a human person.

"By and large the catechetical texts do not seem to integrate the fundamental notions that human persons are by nature religious, that the desire for God is written in the human heart and that the human person is inherently spiritual and not reducible to the merely material. Neither are the texts generally clear that it is precisely in Christ that we have been created in the image and likeness of God. Nor do they emphasize that Christ has restored to us the divine image of God, an image disfigured by sin.

"Rather, too often the impression is left that the human person is the first principle and final end of his/her own existence."

The quote above is from a report delivered by Archbishop Emeritus Daniel Buechlein to his brother bishops in 1997. And while textbooks have improved dramatically, the wounds of our culture's often distorted presentation of people as material-only, morality-neutral masters of all meaning and destiny remain in great need of healing.



Camille Pauley, creator and curriculum developer of the Principles and Choices pro-life religious education program, explains the program's concepts during a workshop at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis on July 25. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

'Principles and Choices' curriculum supplements religious education programs with pro-life focus and strategies

By Natalie Hoefer

For many years, Peggy Geis taught a pro-life curriculum in Catholic schools.

It's something she said seems to have fallen by the wayside. She felt it was important to reintroduce such teaching back into Catholic schools, but at 81, she wasn't sure where or how to begin.

So she gathered pro-life ministry coordinators from eight of the Indianapolis West Deanery parishes about eight months ago for a meeting.

To her surprise, she said, "they felt the same way I did. "We all want so much to have some kind of formal [pro-life] education that we know the archdiocese would approve of, and teachers would accept, and principals."

Geis, pro-life ministry coordinator at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, introduced the group to a pro-life curriculum geared toward youth in seventh through 12th grades through an organization called Healing the Culture, which is based in Kenmore, Wash.

The pro-life program, called "Principles and Choices," is approved by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and has received a bishop's *imprimatur*, or right to publish. "They all got excited about it," Geis said of the West Deanery pro-life coordinators' reaction to Principles and Choices. The group formally created the West Deanery Pro-Life Action Committee, and "decided to sponsor a workshop on this curriculum as our first action," said Geis. The workshop, called "Life Principles," was held at St. Michael the Archangel Parish on July 25. More than 80 teachers, catechists and students turned out for the seminar. According to the Principles and Choices website, the program "helps students master the principles of logic, ethics and justice that inspire them to live with purpose, moral integrity and care for human life," and "gives students a strong philosophical education in 10 core principles that ground Church teachings on respect for human life, social justice and many other contemporary issues." In her presentation at St. Michael the Archangel, Principles and Choices creator and curriculum author Camille Pauley explained the first portion of the curriculum.

pleasure and possession; ego gratification; good beyond self; and ultimate good.

"Levels one and two are natural defaults," she said. "But the goal is to get people to levels three and four. That's when people act for the good of others and not as a means to their own personal happiness."

By helping others move to the third and fourth stages of happiness, said Pauley, more individuals will work for the good of those at risk in the culture of death, and more individuals will seek to preserve life.

After addressing the importance of the source of one's happiness to making decisions in favor of life, the program tackles the topics of truth and reason.

Using the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, the program explains how opinions or theories cannot have internal contradictions.

"In other words, a real being cannot be both 'X' and 'not X,'" Pauley said.

To use this logic in the realm of life, she continued, an unborn baby cannot be "life" to some and "not life" to others—the unborn child is either life, or it isn't.

So how then is the "truth" determined? That is the topic

A theme we can embrace

"Safeguarding the Dignity of Every Human Person," then, turns out to be an urgent reminder that what gives life and meaning to our earthly days and heavenly tomorrows is acknowledging the source of our existence—God Almighty—and obeying his command to love neighbor as self.

Enjoy this Religious Education Supplement filled with examples of how catechesis in our archdiocese is affirming human life and encouraging deeper love for all of our neighbors—for every human person. †



Ken Ogorek is director of catechesis for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

That section, she said, addresses how decisions are made from four basic levels of happiness: physical

of the last portion of the Principles and Choices program.

In this section, the program again relies on heavy philosophical hitters like Plato, Aristotle and Socrates, who taught that truth is recognized by quantity and quality of evidence. By approaching discussions about life with much solid evidence, said Pauley, those defending life can go much further than by using only faith-based arguments.

"I've never seen this much philosophy used to justify the pro-life plan," said Justin Simmons, director of religious education at St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville. "I really like the inclusion of so much philosophy addressing secular mentality rather than just using a lot of theology and religion."

Matthew Fallon, administrator of religious education and youth ministry coordinator at Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville, agreed.

He said he likes "the idea that there's a curriculum to go beyond just saying, 'Hey, this is the teaching of the Church,' but [addresses] why does the Church teach this."

Fallon said that if students don't understand the reasoning behind Church teaching on pro-life issues, then they could fall prey to the "flawed but deeper reasoning" of those in opposition to Church teaching. This lack of understanding could put students at risk of believing that the non-pro-life reasoning is "on an even level [with Church **See LIFE**, page 12

World Meeting of Families' pilgrims hope to share Church's vision for family life

By Sean Gallagher

Doug and Julie Bauman describe themselves as "opportunity getters." So when the couple heard last fall about an archdiocesan-sponsored pilgrimage to Philadelphia for the World Meeting of Families that will take place later this month, they jumped at the chance to go.

"We reach out for ways to enrich our lives," Julie said.

"Life is too short not to jump out and reach," added Doug.

Through their 14 years of marriage, in which they have been blessed with three daughters, the Baumans have also sought ways to enrich the lives of others with the faith that serves as their foundation.

Both are teachers at St. Barnabas School in Indianapolis. They help engaged couples prepare for marriage at St. Barnabas Parish, where they are members. And Doug assists in the parish's



Doug Bauman



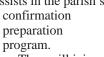
Julie Bauman

and as a Church,' Doug said. "Family is everything. We saw this as an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to really dig deep and think about what truly are the values that make a family strong."

Scott Seibert, marriage and family enrichment coordinator for the archdiocesan Office of Pro-Life and Family Life, said that potential pilgrims had to describe in their application for the pilgrimage how they would share what they learned at the World Meeting of Families with other people when they returned.

He was impressed by the pilgrims' hopes and plans for spreading the Church's message on marriage and family life.

"I think their creativity is incredible," Seibert said. "Each one has his or her own unique way of bringing this to other families and reaching out to other people. It's inspiring.'



They will join other pilgrims from across central and southern Indiana, who hope that their participation in the World Meeting of Families will help them share

the good news about the Church's vision of marriage and family life where they live.

"It's a chance to hopefully learn some ideas and strategies on how to strengthen the family, because it's at the core of who we are as a couple

Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis, Dellacca will travel to Philadelphia with his wife DeInda, their three children and a fourth that they expect to be born in a couple of months.

especially with us taking our family, we are just trying to walk the walk and talk the talk at the same time to some degree, looking at the way that our society puts a lot of other things above direct family relationships," said Dellacca, who, along with his family, is a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield. "Family is really important in its relationship with God, both individually and as a unit." He hopes that he and his family will be able to discuss in Philadelphia what they have learned from the various keynote addresses and breakout sessions at the World Meeting of Families.



Now the single mother feels differently about sharing her faith.

"We all tend to be guarded about our spirituality," said Woodson. "My children and I may wait for someone else to bring it up. In addition to us becoming closer to our faith [through the pilgrimage], hopefully we'll be able to spread it around more."

She is also looking forward to meeting families from around the world in Philadelphia and worshipping with Pope Francis at a Mass on Sept. 27 that organizers expect to draw more than 1 million people.

"I think it's so important to celebrate our differences, especially at times like this with everything that's going on, and to learn and really [be in] fellowship and pray with each other," Woodson said.

Woodson and the Baumans are looking forward to how they can share what they learn at the World Meeting of Families once they return home.

David Dellacca hopes to do this while he is in Philadelphia through social media.

The vice president of technology at



Father Thomas "Ultimately,



Ten themes shape the message of the **World Meeting of Families**

All of the keynote addresses and breakout sessions at The World Meeting of Families that will take place on Sept. 22-25 in Philadelphia are guided by 10 themes that summarize the Church's teaching on marriage and family life.

These themes are explored in Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive, a preparatory catechetical resource for the World Meeting of Families published by Our Sunday Visitor and available online at <u>www.worldmeeting2015.org/</u> about-the-event/catechesis.

The following is a summary of the 10 themes.

- Created for Joy—God created humanity, not through an "accident of evolution," but through his love and desire for us to share in his joy, especially through his Son, Jesus Christ.
- The Mission of Love—God has given humanity the mission to receive his love, share it with others and help heal a world broken through sin.
- The Meaning of Human Sexuality—Creation "reflects God's glory." This includes our bodies and the ability to share in his creative love through human sexuality.
- Two Become One—God calls humanity to community. "Marriage is a uniquely intimate form of friendship" in which a man and woman "love each other in the manner of God's covenant. ... Married love is fruitful and offered without reservation. This love is in the image of Jesus's faithfulness to the Church."
- Creating the Future—Married couples are called to be open to new life. "Children reared with love and guidance are the foundation for a loving future. ... Families are the bedrock for all larger communities."
- All Love Bears Fruit—Families teach what it means to be

While the Baumans see a broad array of ways they can share what they will learn in Philadelphia, Julie knows that it will be based on how the pilgrimage strengthens their marriage.

"Anything that you can do to add to it and make it better in any aspect of your life is going to be a benefit, not only to us, but to our family, our students and our community," Julie said. "It will trickle down from there."

Simmona Woodson, a member of St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis, will also be on the archdiocesan pilgrimage. She hopes that it will help her and her two children be more open to sharing the faith with the broader community.

She said she felt comfortable doing this in the past, but finds it more challenging in today's cultural climate.

"We were all a family," said Woodson of the neighborhood in which she grew up. "I have a humanitarian side from my mom. I would take other kids to church with me, and sometimes talk to their parents about it, and attend their churches with them."

Those discussions, he said, "could be a launch point through which I could share some ideas and thoughts through social media."

He plans on sharing his thoughts on a blog at brothersjourney.org and on Twitter @ddellacca.

Whether it's in parish or school settings, in neighborhood relationships or on social media. Seibert foresees the pilgrims, with their own experiences of marriage and family, helping each other grow in their knowledge and love of the Church's vision for both and their desire to share it with others.

"I hope that through this learning, this time together and sharing their stories and listening to one another over these eight days," Seibert said, "that they'll be able to see that we're not alone, and we all have struggles, and God is alive in all of it." †

numan by institting and being witnesses to "love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, mutual respect, patience and humility."

• Light in a Dark World—The family is a school of love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, mutual respect, patience and humility. In these ways, the family teaches what it means to be human. Thing such as poverty, affluence, pornography, contraception, philosophical and other intellectual mistakes can all create contexts that challenge or threaten healthy family life. The Church resists these things for the sake of protecting the family.

• A Home for the Wounded Heart—Poverty, illness, same-sex attraction and unemployment are a few of the many situations that give people pain today. "Christian families and networks of families should be sources of mercy, safety, friendship and support for those struggling with" such issues.

• Mother, Teacher, Family: The Nature and Role of the Church—The Church serves in this life as "our mother and teacher, our comforter and guide [and] our family of faith."

Choosing Life—God's love is "our life mission." By embracing God's mission, we will have a new perspective on many issues, not just family. "Our mission of love will require courage and fortitude. Jesus is calling, and we can respond, choosing lives of faith, hope, charity, joy, service and mission." †

Faith, fun and friendship draw people with special needs closer to God

By John Shaughnessy

Christina Flum's voice fills with emotion as she recalls the touching moment between a mother and her son.

The moment happened as Flum led a group of Catholics with special needs in a May crowning ceremony for the Blessed Mother.

"We made flower bouquets, had a little procession and had a May crowning," recalls Flum, the director of catechetical ministry at the Aquinas Center in Sellersburg, a resource center for the New Albany Deanery. "After the ceremony, we told them to take the flowers home for their mothers for Mother's Day.

"One of the members of our group is non-verbal, but you could see his excitement by his face and by his clapping of his hands. It was like, 'I have a present for my mom!' When he gave her the flowers, the look on his face and the look on her face was priceless."

That moment captures many of the great gifts that religious education leaders across the archdiocese receive as they teach and share the Catholic faith with people who have special needs.

"Being with them has made an impact on my faith," says Flum, a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. "Just seeing their hope and their unconditional love that's what God has for all of us. And I see it in them."

She also has learned from their parents.

"I'm the caregiver of my mother," she says. "My mom is 80, she's had four strokes and blood cancer, and she has back issues. As her caregiver, I think of the faith and the unconditional love these parents have for their children. It's such a motivation for me, and it helps me when I go home to take care of my mom."

Flum works with the group in a program called "Faith, Fun and Friends."

"We wanted a name that wouldn't be intimidating for someone to join us," she says. "They become friends very easily. It's also important, no matter our age or mental capacity, to know what it means to be Church, what it means to be Catholic. I'm amazed at how much they know. When they receive Communion, they say, 'That's Jesus.'"

That combination of faith, fun and friendship also pervades the religious education program for children with special needs at St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour.

Eighth-grade students from the parish's Sunday religious education program volunteer to work side by side with the children with special needs.

"We've found that most of our kids are more open to following the model of our eighth-graders," says Christina Smith, the coordinator of religious education at St. Ambrose, "It's created special bonds between them. Our middle-school kids are learning to love their peers in a special way. They learn how we're all just human. It's great to have a Church environment that shows these kids that God loves them where they are." And sometimes the children with special needs offer their own lessons about love and faith. Smith shares the story of a child with autism who was initially so excited to serve as a lector during the parish's annual Mass specifically for children with special needs. Yet before the Mass started, something happened, and the child didn't want to participate. So Smith sat with him in the church's "cry room." At different parts of the Mass, she asked him if he wanted to pray the "Our Father" or be blessed by the pastor celebrating the Mass, Father Daniel Staublin. Each time, the child screamed,



Grant Bishop and Christina Flum share a moment of joy together during a recent session of "Faith, Fun and Friends"—a weekly program at the Aquinas Center in Sellersburg, a resource center for the New Albany Deanery. Flum leads the program that is designed to enhance the Catholic faith of people with special needs in the deanery. (Submitted photo)

"No!" Yet at the end of Mass, the child did something unexpected and moving when Father Staublin thanked all the children for their participation. The child rushed to the altar and wrapped his arms around the priest.

"Sometimes we don't see or understand what these kids are going through inside," Smith says. "But that was a moment that showed these kids are experiencing God's love. It shows the blessing and the simplicity of Christ's love for each of us."

Nicole McConnell has experienced many of those moments in her 17 years of being the catechist leader of the program for adults with special needs at St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg. She shares the story of one member of her group—an adult whose sometimes-irreverent approach to life changes when the group is in church.

"When we're at church together and we're talking about God and Jesus, there's something that comes over him that is so reverent and so from his heart," she says. "He just points to Jesus on the cross every time we're in church, and he says, 'He's the man.'



Young women from SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood pose on Feb. 8 wearing clothes highlighted at a fashion show at the Indianapolis South Deanery faith community. Several events that day raised awareness of human trafficking. The clothes in the fashion show were designed and created by Cambodian women rescued from human trafficking. The events of the day were organized by parish leaders of pro-life, catechetical and other ministries. (Submitted photo)

"You know that Jesus has given him something in his life."

Sharing her Catholic faith with individuals with special needs—people she considers as friends—has also given McConnell "something" in her life.

"We've all been together so long. We meet every single week. We talk about God's presence in our life and how God shows his love for us in the little things of life. We also talk about how we can show God's love in our lives—how we can give in return to others.

"We are a family now, the friends and the catechists. We are all so close. I see it every time I'm with my friends in church. When they feel something so wondrous and joyful, I feel it, too. It's a faith-sharing opportunity that I couldn't do without in my life."

(For more information about faith formation opportunities for people with special needs in central and southern Indiana, visit <u>www.oce.archindy.org</u> and click on "Catechesis for Persons with Special Needs.") †

Pro-life and catechetical leaders collaborate to spread the Gospel of life

By Sean Gallagher

In his message for Lent earlier this year, Pope Francis invited parishes around the world to be "islands of mercy in the midst of a sea of indifference."

Pro-life and catechetical leaders in SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood heeded the pontiff's call by helping parishioners grow in awareness of homelessness and reach out to help homeless youths in Johnson County.

Collaboration between pro-life advocates and parishioners involved in catechesis at the Indianapolis South Deanery faith community has sparked interest from other archdiocesan parishes, and can serve as a model of how such parish ministries can work together to spread more widely the good news about the dignity and sanctity of life.

SS. Francis and Clare specifically

worked with the Franklin-based KIC-IT (Kids in Crisis Intervention Team) in a multifaceted pro-life and catechetical effort.

"It's part of the continuum from conception to natural death," said Jim Recasner, a leader in the parish's Respect Life Committee. "As a part of all of this, we met pregnant young ladies. As a parish, we've gotten into an ongoing relationship with KIC-IT to help these moms through the Gabriel Project."

The Gabriel Project is a parish-based pro-life organization that gives support to mothers in crisis pregnancies.

Patricia McGill, SS. Francis and Clare Parish's coordinator of religious education, said that children in the catechetical program learned last spring about homelessness in age-appropriate ways, and "how it's our responsibility as Christians to help end that cycle for them."

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COLLABORATE continued from page 11

The relationship between the parish and KIC-IT that began with this collaboration has been sustained, says Monica Robinson, coordinator of youth ministry at SS. Francis and Clare Parish.

"There are people from our parish who are volunteering there now," she said. "So the beauty and gift [of working together] has just been amazing. And it's because of the collaboration."

The common effort to learn about homelessness and to help those who suffer from it at SS. Francis and Clare came on the heels of a similar initiative on Feb. 8 when pro-life, catechetical and other ministries came together to help the parish and the broader community learn about human trafficking and to help its victims.

They worked with Center for Global Impact, a Greenwood-based Christian ministry that helps women who were victims of human trafficking in Cambodia.

The day dedicated to human trafficking at SS. Francis and Clare fell on the feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, a Sudanese saint who died in 1947 and had been sold into slavery. It included talks about human trafficking on the local and international levels, sampling of dishes made from recipes of women rescued from human trafficking in Cambodia, and a fashion show featuring clothes designed and made by the women.

According to Robinson, the event was publicized widely and was attended by several hundred people, many from beyond the parish.

"Our goal was not just parish awareness, it was community awareness," she said. "We had a lot of people from the community attend."

And all of this happened because of the common effort of parish pro-life, catechetical and other ministry leaders.

"These efforts helped open our minds and hearts a little more to the power of working together, and the impact that we can make in working together," Robinson said. "That's been a fruit from it, for sure."



Dave Sever, president of Kids in Crisis Intervention Team, a Franklin-based organization that helps homeless youths, speaks about homelessness on March 2 at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Church to students in the parish's school. During Lent, pro-life and catechetical leaders at SS. Francis and Clare led an effort to help parishioners learn about being homeless, and reach out to help those suffering from it. (Submitted photo)

"For me, it's almost essential," said Recasner of the collaboration. "The youths and young people are the future of our Church. To be able to work together with the ministries that help develop their faith [is important]."

Such collaboration has also taken place at St. Joseph University Parish in Terre Haute.

Members of its Pro-Life Committee and the men and women's ACTS teams (a retreat and faith renewal program) worked together to sponsor a day of reflection in September 2014 on the Divine Mercy devotion and its relevance for pro-life

advocacy. Catholics from across the Terre Haute Deanery attended it.

Middle school students in St. Joseph's religious education program have learned about the Church's teachings on the sanctity of life from catechist Amy Langham.

"I try not only to teach them, but for them to have dialogue about the life issues," she said. "I encourage them to dialogue about life issues because they want to have a voice, and we need to have the teenagers know more about their Catholic faith so that they can express it to others that may not see what Catholics

are like."

Connie Fitch, a leader on St. Joseph's Pro-Life Committee, has encouraged such collaboration at the parish level and beyond with such community pro-life organizations as Wabash Valley Right-to-Life.

"It's important to collaborate because you can spread the message," Fitch said. "You have a larger audience to share the message with. And I think it's important that we not only educate our fellow parishioners, but our community about what a precious gift from God that life is." †



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teaching], like either one could be right," he said.

Fallon feels the Principles and Choices curriculum could "get the kids to understand why we believe what we do. I think once they understand that, they'll be all for it."

While the program is geared for those in seventh through 12th grade, Patrick Verhiley sees the program and its approach as applicable to those beyond high school. Verhiley serves as director of recruitment St. Mary's Press or the Didache series, or whatever you're using," she said. "We show you how to implement it fully in line with the framework guidelines, and it has received all the appropriate approvals."

The program consists of three books that can be covered in a few weeks a year over the course of two to three years. It includes other supplemental

material, including slides, lecture notes, a minute-by-minute learning plan, a play, a video, a game and more.

How effective is the program? Very, said Pauley.

themselves, everything "We've done else is going to be for quantified studies naught." It made us where we test students' attitudes and opinions before they get any of this learning, and then we test them afterward to see where their opinions have changed," she explained. "We get about an 80 percent shift from pro-choice students who move to be pro-life, or students who were pro-life but silent who move to wanting to be vocal about it." Geis is anxious to see what fruit blossoms in the archdiocese by the seeds sown in the workshop. "At first we expected 50 people, then 60, and then we got more than 80!" the octogenarian exclaimed.

Peggy Geis, pro-life coordinator at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, listens during the "Life Principles" workshop held at the parish on July 25. Geis was instrumental in organizing the workshop. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

for the San Damiano Scholars Program for Church Leadership at Marian University in Indianapolis.

He and the students he brought to the workshop found the information "thought-provoking."

"I love how she's built up from, 'If we don't have people define

happiness for themselves, everything else is going to be for naught,' " Verhiley said. "It made us question if we're there yet [at stages three or four of happiness]-you can't move someone to levels three and four if you're not there yet."

For youths, Pauley said the Principles and Choices program can be incorporated into existing religious education programs, or could be done separately.

"We've made user guides to show you how it works with any of the major religion textbooks you may be using, whether it be Ave Maria Press or

question if we're there yet [at stages three or four of happiness]—you can't move someone to levels three and four if you're not there yet.'

'I love how she's

don't have people

built up from, "If we

define happiness for

—Patrick Verhiley

"Now we'll just wait for the Holy Spirit to see what he does."

(For more information on the Principles and Choices pro-life curriculum, log on to www.principlesandchoices.com.) †