

Imprimatur and Nihil Obstat

In the Catholic Church an *Imprimatur* is an official declaration by a bishop that a book or other printed work may be published. The *Imprimatur* grant is normally preceded by a *Nihil Obstat* given by a theologian who has the knowledge, orthodoxy, and prudence necessary to review the publication for theological accuracy.

The *Nihil Obstat* and *Imprimatur* are declarations that a publication is free of doctrinal or moral error. They do not imply that the grantor agrees with the contents, opinions, or statements expressed in the publication.

When Dr. Kathie Amidei and Sr. Kieran Sawyer applied to the Archdiocese of Milwaukee for an *Imprimatur* for the **Conversations about L.I.F.E.** program, they were told that the United States bishops do not grant the *Imprimatur* for online resources because such resources can be easily altered. They then approached Dr. John Grabowski, the Director of Moral Theology and Ethics at Catholic University, asking him to suggest a reputable theologian who might review the program and, they hoped, grant the *Nihil Obstat*. Dr. Grabowski recommended Dr. Christopher Klofft, S.T.D., a professor of moral theology at Assumption College in Worcester, MA. Dr. Klofft accepted the challenge and spent several months reviewing each lesson as it was completed. He also helped the authors to make any changes needed to assure the theological and moral accuracy of the lessons.

Upon receiving approval from Dr. Klofft, the authors approached Reverend Jerome Listecky, the Archbishop of Milwaukee, asking for some kind of endorsement in lieu of an *Imprimatur*. In response to their request, Archbishop Listecky issued the following statement:

*After review of this work by theological consultant Christopher Klofft, Ph.D., **Conversations about L.I.F.E.** has been found to be free from doctrinal or moral error as of August 6, 2019. However, because online materials can be easily altered, there is no guarantee that changes to the material have not been made.*

Signed: +Jerome E. Listecky

The Archbishop asked further that the material be reviewed in the future on a regular basis so as to assure that no later changes have been made.

In response to this limited endorsement, Ocreative, the agency that is providing the online version of the program, states:

The materials made available on www.GetFamiliesTalking.org are presented as secured PDFs and PowerPoints. A secure password is required to gain access to edit the final lesson package material files and website content, all of which are protected on the hosting servers. All appropriate security precautions have been put in place to prevent the website, [GetFamiliesTalking.org](http://www.GetFamiliesTalking.org), from being changed or altered by any third party. Any future changes to the content, imagery, and lesson materials will be

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