The Pro-Life Guide for Parish Communities

Prepared by the Respect Life Office of the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey

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Foreword

You, the Parish Respect Life Representatives/Coordinators, are essential in building a culture of life.

Parish Respect Life Coordinators and their Committees: provide resources to their communities on life issues, actively evangelize their fellow parishioners on the life issues, and support their pastor and priests in making pro-life prayer and activity visible and viable at the parish level.

In coordination with the pastor, the Parish Respect Life Coordinator organizes and implements the efforts of the Bishops' Pastoral Plan for Pro Life Activities through four areas: prayer and worship, education, pastoral care, and public policy.

Duties
Read and become familiar with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Plan for Pro Life Activities.

Actively promoting a renewed respect for human life is the responsibility of every Catholic. The parish pro-life committee assists in a special way by helping to make the parish a center of life, a place where parishioners understand the issues and the importance of meeting the needs of those who are most vulnerable—especially mothers and their unborn children, and those who are seriously ill or dying and their families. It may be a distinct committee, or it might be a subcommittee of another parish organization. Whatever its structure, its membership should include representatives of both adult and youth parish groups, members of organizations that represent persons with disabilities, persons of minority cultures, and those responsible for education and pastoral care.

The chairperson of the parish committee is appointed by the pastor, and it is important that the two be able to work well together. The chair recruits volunteers to help meet the needs the committee serves. Parish committees should be mindful of the need for renewal from time to time in regard to membership, talents, and interests.

The parish committee relies on the diocesan pro-life director for information and guidance.

Copies of the USCCB Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities can be found at: http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/pastoral-plan-prolife-activities.cfm
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Some Important Websites

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

New Jersey State Catholic Conference of Bishops
http://www.njcathconf.com/

The National Catholic Bioethics Center
http://www.ncbcenter.org/

NJ Diocesan Respect for Life Offices

Archdiocese of Newark
https://www.rcan.org/offices-and-ministries/respect-life

Diocese of Camden
http://www.camdendiocese.org/

Diocese of Metuchen

Diocese of Paterson
https://www.patersondiocese.org/respect-life-office

Diocese of Trenton
http://www.respectlifetoday.com/
How to Start a Respect Life Committee in Your Parish or Church

It's easier than you think!

Step 1: Read the "PASTORAL PLAN FOR PRO-LIFE ACTIVITIES OF THE BISHOPS OF THE UNITED STATES."

Step 2: It is imperative that you have the support of your Pastor. You may want to work with him on developing a mission statement for your ministry so that your role and scope are clearly defined. Let him know that your committee will handle the details always with his consent.

Step 3: Clear a date on the parish calendar...pick a night when both the school and parish calendars are clear so that nothing interferes with your PARISH/CHURCH INFORMATION NIGHT.

Step 4: Set the date, publish three weeks in advance in your parish bulletin, and through the school notes sent home with the children, that there will be a speaker and film presentation on the pro-life issue.

Step 5: Hold the meeting; have a sign-in sheet with name, address, phone number, email and area of interest.

Step 6: Invite the following to be representatives on your committee: PTA President or (Spiritual Director of PTA), K of C Representative, Parish Council Representative, Liturgy Committee Rep., Rosary Guild, Altar Society, Scout and youth groups.

Step 7: Meet as a parish committee as necessary - often this will only be as often as an event needs to be publicized. Your committee should meet at least quarterly so that your long and short range goals are being accomplished.

Step 8: Create social media platforms for your Committee and have your parish link them to their own Facebook, Instagram, and twitter are all great ways to spread to word and keep your club connected.

Additional ideas:

**Bulletin Inserts**

Bulletin Inserts in the weekly bulletin can be an extremely effective way to educate the "people in the pews." Bulletin inserts can be obtained from your diocesan Respect Life Office or from the USCCB Word of Life series, [http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/word-of-life/index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/word-of-life/index.cfm). All bulletin inserts must be submitted to the parish office in a timely manner and need to be approved by the pastor.

**Choose Life Banners**

If your parish does not already have one, set up a choose life banner outside your church! This banner offers a crisis pregnancy hotline for mothers considering abortion. If you are interested in ordering one contact the Respect Life offices of the Archdiocese of Newark.
Primary Goals of the Parish Pro-Life Committee

To Become Informed on the life issues (abortion, infanticide, stem cell research, cloning, assisted suicide and euthanasia). Often conferences are held by your diocesan Respect for Life Office which will offer a conference or workshop which is geared to education volunteers on important life issues.

To Keep Informed on the status of the life issues by subscribing to key pro-life publications and by visiting the following websites:
https://www.rcan.org/offices-and-ministries/respect-life/newsletters
http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues-abortion/index.shtml
http://www.nchla.org/

To Inform Others within the parish community, and with the assistance of the pastor and parish priest(s) on the sanctity of human life, of the radical nature of the Supreme Court abortion decisions and of the consequent need to restore legal protection for all human life through protective legislation both at the state and national level.

To Recruit Volunteers with Volunteer Interest Surveys, personal contact and other means to connect those members of the parish who are interested in becoming involved in efforts to restore respect for human life and secure legal protection for the unborn.

To Organize those who have been informed and recruited into various projects designed to:

Pray individually and with others for the restoration of respect for all human life.

Educate within the parish on the life issues.

Respond to action alerts distributed by the NJ Catholic Conference (NJCC) and National Committee for Human Life Amendment (NCHLA) at both the state and national level.

Express support for pro-life legislation to legislators at the local, state and national level.

Raise funds for local and state pro-life activities and for local pregnancy help centers.

Stimulate support for membership in local and state pro-life organizations.

Focus attention on the life issues at key times during the year, namely on January 22nd, the anniversary of the infamous Supreme Court abortion decisions, and on Respect Life Sunday, which is the first Sunday of October.

Support Service Projects to aid the elderly, the handicapped, the poor, distressed pregnant women, women and men suffering the aftereffects of abortion,
Sample One Year Schedule for Pro-Life Activities within the Parish

**September**
Hold Voter Registration Drive
Order Respect Life Program Flyers from USCCB *(p.35)*
Work with pastor to prepare a Respect Life Sunday Liturgy

**October**
Respect Life Sunday is the First Sunday of October
Begin Spiritual Adoption Program
Distribute Respect Life Program Flyers
Promote and participate in the local Life Chain
Hold a Rosary for Life
National Cupcakes for Life (October 9th) [http://cupcakesforlife.com/](http://cupcakesforlife.com/)
World Porridge Day (October 10th) [https://www.marysmealsusa.org/](https://www.marysmealsusa.org/)
Plan fundraiser for bus to annual March for Life/Rally for Life *(p. 30)*

**November**
Spiritual Adoption Program - Month 1 (this can run 9 months or 9 weeks) *(p.8)*
November 1-2, Feasts of All Saints/All Souls – Invite a guest speaker on —end-of-life issues/living wills‖ *(p.33)*
Promote Pro-life Poster/Arts Contest for Students

**December**
Spiritual Adoption Program - Month 2
Mass for Expectant Families on the Feast of the Holy Family
December 12 –Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe – Patroness of the Unborn, Hold a Holy Hour for Life *(p.13)*

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**We must protect human life at all stages and in all conditions.**
There are many “life issues”

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To learn more about these topics and church teaching, visit:
January
Spiritual Adoption Program – Month 3
Advertise Annual Diocesan Respect Life Prayer Service/Mass
Hold bus trip to March for Life/Rally for Life – Jan. 22 (p. 30)

February
Spiritual Adoption Program – Month 4
Invite a Pro-Life Speaker in for a Lenten talk (p.33)

March
Spiritual Adoption Program – Month 5
March 25, Feast of the Annunciation – Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary with Pro-Life Meditations

April
Spiritual Adoption Program - Month 6
Divine Mercy –Promote Post Abortion Healing Ministries by placing notice in Parish bulletin and information in Parish Literature rack
Include an intercession for the healing of those who suffer after an abortion in the Prayers of the Faithful (p. 21)

May
Spiritual Adoption Program – Month 7
Mother’s Day – Run a fundraiser for the Archdiocesan Mercy House

June
Spiritual Adoption Program – Month 8
Plan a Tribute to Fathers on Father’s Day

July - August
Spiritual Adoption Program – Month 9 –Hold Baby Shower Party and give material goods to the Archdiocesan Mercy House.
Hold a Carwash for Life to raise funds
Have a table at your local church fair with pro-life literature (p. 38)
Meet with your pastor to plan next year’s pro-life activities
Spiritual Adoption Program

Resources and materials for parish and school programs such as posters and prayer cards are located on the Archdiocese of Baltimore website: http://www.archbalt.org/respect-life/spiritual-adoption/index.cfm

Purpose of the Program: To have the parish/school community praying for unborn babies who may be in danger of being aborted and to educate the community about the development of the baby over the nine-month period before birth.

Note: This program can be condensed to run over a nine-week period, each week representing one month of pregnancy.

Instructions:
Step 1. Meet with pastor/principal/teachers to discuss the program.

Step 2. Place a bulletin insert in the parish bulletin/school newsletter or send out a notice announcing the program. (See Sample Announcement 1. and 2.)

Step 3. Print up pledge cards on heavy card stock and cut the individual cards. Distribute to parishioners after Mass. For students, you may wish to distribute the pledge cards at prayer time or after a first
Friday Mass. Pledge cards do not need to be collected.

Step 4. Distribute prayer cards with Archbishop Fulton Sheen’s prayer. Prayer posters can be used in the classrooms to help students include this prayer in their daily prayers.

Step 5. In the weeks and months following the start of the program, thank those who are participating in the program and remind everyone to continue with their daily prayer.

Step 6. Place the information (see attached) regarding the development of the unborn child in the womb for each month, in the parish bulletin. Teachers should be asked to read this information to the students each month so that students can learn about the baby’s development. Fetal models can be used as a visual aid.

Step 7. Plan a baby shower and ask parishioners/students to bring a new baby item to Mass to celebrate the—birth of their spiritually adopted baby.

Sample Announcement #1

Everyone loves the beauty and innocence of a baby. As an expression of that love, our parish/school announces an adoption program for young and old alike. The members of our parish/school community will soon have the opportunity to spiritually adopt a child who is newly conceived. You see not all babies get the chance to be born. In fact, almost 4,000 babies lose their lives to abortion each day. It is these babies, who are in danger of having their lives ended before birth, that you are being asked to spiritually adopt.

You may —adopt a baby individually or as a family by signing a pledge card. You will be asked to name the child for whom you will be praying, thereby giving the baby the humanity he or she deserves. You will be asked to pray a simple daily prayer for this baby.

You will receive monthly reports describing your baby’s development and your child will be born in nine months.

There are millions of babies in our country who are in desperate need of your prayers. Please spiritually adopt one and share the love for life that God has given you!
Sample Announcement #2
In 1973, a court decision was rendered legalizing abortion throughout the entire nine months of pregnancy. This decision, known as Roe v. Wade, is the reason why almost 1 million abortions are permitted in the United States each year. This enormous number of deaths can be numbing for us. Each of us wonders, What can one person do to end this horrible period in our nation's history? We can pray!

That is what you are asked to do today. Please make a personal commitment to pray for one unborn baby who is in danger of being aborted. You are being asked to—spiritually adopt this one unknown baby for the next nine months. You will pray daily for this baby and for the baby’s mother, that this baby will be carried to term and experience the fullness of life—a life that our Heavenly Father gave to him or to her.

Please complete the pledge cards. You may use the Archbishop Fulton Sheen’s prayer or you can make up your own. Please pray daily for the baby and her mother. Your prayers can help the woman contemplating abortion choose Life over death. Please share the love of life given to you by the Lord of all Life and join the Spiritual Adoption Program.

Monthly Reports on Developing Baby/Bulletin Inserts or Read Aloud to Class

Month One Developing Baby
Your spiritually adopted baby has been quite active over the past month. Already your baby is 10,000 times bigger than at conception. Your baby has developed the foundations of the brain, spinal cord and nervous system by the 20th day. His heart began to beat on the 21st day and is pumping blood through its own circulatory system. Your baby is most vulnerable during this next month of being aborted. Pray that the Lord of Life might move the heart of the mother to give him the most precious gift of all—the gift of life.

Month Two Developing Baby
Your baby is making progress developing all of his external features and internal organs. Her brain is functioning at 40 days. Her mother can hear her heartbeat now with an ultrasound stethoscope. Her milk-teeth buds are present at 6 ½ weeks. It is reported that at two months she can suck her thumb!

From this moment onward, your spiritually adopted baby grows and refines her body. But everything she needs to survive once she is born is already present by the end of the eighth week.

Month Three Developing Baby
Your baby is quite active in the womb now—although his mother won’t feel him for another couple of months. If his mother’s womb had a window, you could watch your spiritually adopted baby squint, swallow and move his tongue. He can make a tight fist if you touch his palm. He obtains the oxygen his body needs through the umbilical cord.

The baby you are praying for weighs about one ounce. What a miracle he is!
Month Four Developing Baby
Well, your little baby now weighs 6 ounces. She has fingernails and eyelashes. She has her own unique fingerprints which all remain for the rest of her life. Her taste buds are working.
Her sense of hearing is present at 14 weeks. There are no major bodily developments anymore. Your spiritually adopted baby is already well formed internally and externally. All she needs now is time to gain weight and to grow strong.

Month Five Developing Baby
Your spiritually adopted baby weighs over one pound now. His mother can now feel him moving. Before, he was too small for her to feel. Although he swam with ease in his watery world, he needed to be big and strong enough to kick hard against the uterine wall and dent it – the inside uterine wall has no feeling.
You are midway through the pregnancy now. Your prayers have helped your baby’s mother continue her pregnancy and seek the help she needs.

Month Six Developing Baby
Your spiritually adopted baby is growing beautifully now. Her weight is approaching two pounds. Babies that are born prematurely at this time have a very good chance of surviving. The medical advances in caring for extremely small newborn infants are extraordinary indeed!

Month Seven and Eight Developing Baby
You are in the home stretch with your spiritually adopted baby. He is completely formed and has been since about 8 weeks. All he is doing now is gaining weight and making his mom uncomfortable with his size. In a short time the baby will be born. His mother has plans to take him home or to place him for adoption into a loving family. She knows she can receive assistance from the church and the pregnancy help centers. Your baby’s mother appreciates the prayers that you have said for her and her baby throughout her pregnancy. It has not been easy, but your prayers have given her the grace to seek the help she needs.

Week Before Program Ends
Next week we will conclude our Spiritual Adoption Program. We are planning a baby shower to celebrate the birth of all those babies who will be born because of your prayers. We will be collecting baby items such as_______________________________.
Please bring your item to church/school next week. (Place a bassinette in back of church or in school office for collection of items).
Happy Birthday Adopted Baby

Your spiritually adopted baby was born this month – nine months after her mother conceived her. The only change at birth is a change in her external life support system. She is no different now than she was before birth except that she breathes and eats differently. He is truly a miracle! He began as a cell and has developed over the past nine months into a unique human baby. Never before in history, nor ever again, will anyone exist who is just like your spiritually adopted baby. You may never meet the mother and baby but your prayers saved his life! Thank you!

For help in starting this program in your parish/school or to borrow a fetal model, call the Office of Respect for Life

Sample Pledge Cards

I,_____________________,
promise to spiritually adopt a baby in danger of abortion by praying daily for the life of that child.

Due Date___________
A HOLY HOUR FOR LIFE
A HOLY HOUR FOR LIFE: PRAYERS BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT FOR THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

Extended Silent Prayer
+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 6:35-40

Jesus said to the crowds:
"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.
But I told you that although you have seen me, you do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me.
And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day.
For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Extended Silent Prayer

Litany of the Sacred Heart
Kyrie Eleison  Kyrie Eleison
Christe Eleison  Christe Eleison
Kyrie Eleison  Kyrie Eleison
  Christ, hear us. Christ, hear us.
  Christ, graciously hear us. Christ, graciously hear us.

  God, our Father in heaven, have mercy on us
  God the Son,
  Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us
  God, the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us
  Holy Trinity, One God, have mercy on us

  Heart of Jesus, Son of the Eternal Father, have mercy on us
  Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit
  in the womb of the Virgin Mary, have mercy on us
  Heart of Jesus, united in substance
  to the Word of God, have mercy on us
  Heart of Jesus, of infinite majesty, have mercy on us
  Heart of Jesus, sacred temple of God, have mercy on us
  Heart of Jesus, tabernacle of the Most High One, have mercy on us
  Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of heaven, have mercy on us
  Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of charity, have mercy on us
  Heart of Jesus, abode of justice and love, have mercy on us
  Heart of Jesus, full of goodness and love, have mercy on us
  Heart of Jesus, wellspring of all virtues, have mercy on us
  Heart of Jesus, most worthy of all praise, have mercy on us
  Heart of Jesus, king and center of all hearts, have mercy on us
  Heart of Jesus, in whom are all the treasures
  of wisdom and knowledge, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, in whom dwells
the fullness of divinity, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, in whom the Father
was well pleased, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, of whose fullness
we have all received, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, desire of the everlasting hills, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, patient and most merciful, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, enriching all who invoke you, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, fountain of life and holiness, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, atonement for our sins, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, overwhelmed with insults, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, bruised for our offenses, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, obedient unto death, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, pierced with a lance, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, our peace and reconciliation, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, victim of sins, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, salvation of those who trust in you, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, hope of those who die in you, have mercy on us
Heart of Jesus, delight of all the saints, have mercy on us

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, spare us, Lord.
graciously hear us, Lord have mercy on us

Jesus, meek and humble of heart
Make our hearts like to yours.

Let us pray,

God our loving Father,
grant wisdom to those who govern us,
compassion and courage
to those who work to defend human life,
and safety and care to every human being.
For you alone who formed us in our mothers’ wombs,
and who call us home to heaven,
are God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Extended Silent Prayer
+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 6:53-58

Jesus said to the Jews:
"Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,
you do not have life within you.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
has eternal life,
and I will raise him on the last day.

For my flesh is true food,
and my blood is true drink.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him.

Just as the living Father sent me
and I have life because of the Father,
so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me.

This is the bread that came down from heaven.
Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died,
whoever eats this bread will live forever."

The Gospel of the Lord
Extended Silent Prayer
Litany for Life

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

God of all creation, Lord, have mercy.
Christ, through whom
all things were made. Lord, have mercy.
Spirit of life and truth, Lord, have mercy.
On each child just conceived. Lord, have mercy.
For their safety and health, Lord, have mercy.
For nine months of growth, Lord, have mercy.
That an angel may protect them, Lord, have mercy.
For peace and for hope, Lord, have mercy.
On all new fathers, Lord, have mercy.
On fathers who are alone, Lord, have mercy.
On fathers unemployed, Lord, have mercy.
On fathers addicted, Lord, have mercy.
On fathers who are abusive, Lord, have mercy.
On young fathers who are afraid, Lord, have mercy.
On fathers who’ve run away, Lord, have mercy.
On all new mothers, Lord, have mercy.
On mothers who are alone, Lord, have mercy.
On mothers unemployed, Lord, have mercy.
On mothers addicted, Lord, have mercy.
On mothers who are abusive, Lord, have mercy.
On young mothers who are afraid, Lord, have mercy.
On mothers who are in pain, Lord, have mercy.
On those who defend life, Lord, have mercy.
On those who love the child in the womb, Lord, have mercy.
On those who pray for the unborn child, Lord, have mercy.
On all who work to change unjust laws, Lord, have mercy.
On all who live the Gospel of Life, Lord, have mercy.
On Congressmen who work for life, Lord, have mercy.
On our President, Lord, have mercy.
On the members of the House, Lord, have mercy.
On the members of the Senate, Lord, have mercy.
On all to little to vote or persuade, Lord, have mercy.
On all who work for life, Lord, have mercy.
On doctors of life and of truth, Lord, have mercy.
On residents who love the little child, Lord, have mercy.
On doctors who gaze on life’s mysteries, Lord, have mercy.
On physicians who see into the womb, Lord, have mercy.
On surgeons who heal the unborn child, Lord, have mercy.
On all who defend the child in the womb, Lord, have mercy.
On nurses who love little babies, Lord, have mercy.
On nursing students, Lord, have mercy.
On those who first hear the heartbeat, Lord, have mercy.
On those who first feel a kick, Lord, have mercy.
On nurses who cradle the newborn, Lord, have mercy.
On nurses who foster the unborn, Lord, have mercy.
On all who protect defenseless life, Lord, have mercy.
On judges who struggle with justice, Lord, have mercy.
On lawyers who seek to speak truth, Lord, have mercy.
On judges who love life, Lord, have mercy.
On the judges of our Supreme Court, Lord, have mercy.
On those who argue before them, Lord, have mercy.
On the unborn child
who rests in their hands, Lord, have mercy.
On all victims of abortion, Lord, have mercy.
On the woman whose memories
cause her to cry, Lord, have mercy.
On those whose pain nags and holds on, Lord, have mercy.
On the unborn who rest with God, Lord, have mercy.
On all who seek mercy, Lord, have mercy.
On all who seek healing,
and mercy and perfect peace, Lord, have mercy.

God our loving Father,
grant wisdom to those who govern us,
compassion and courage
to those who work to defend human life,
and safety and care to every human being.
For you alone who formed us in our mother's wombs,
and who call us home to heaven,
are God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Extended Silent Prayer

HOLY HOUR FOR LIFE: BASED UPON REFLECTIONS OF SAINT JOHN PAUL II

Eucharistic Holy Hour for Life

Procession

After all have assembled, a priest or deacon, wearing cope and humeral veil, brings the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar, during which time a song may be sung. He may be accompanied by altar servers with candles. The Blessed Sacrament is placed on the altar. The presiding minister then kneels before the altar and incenses the Blessed Sacrament. The opening song is concluded and a period of silent prayer follows.

Opening Prayer

The presiding minister then goes to the chair, where he prays the following opening prayer:
Bestow on us, we pray, O Lord, the spirit of charity,
so that, sustained by the Body and Blood of your Only Begotten Son,
we may be effective in nurturing among all
the peace that he has left us.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
R. Amen.

Throughout the hour the following five sets of readings and responses are prayed, interspersed by extended periods of silent prayer. One or more lectors may read the reflections to the assembly. The presider will lead the assembly in each prayer.

Life Seen in the Perspective of Eternity

A Reflection from Saint John Paul II's "Letter to the Elderly"

There is an urgent need to recover a correct perspective on life as a whole. The correct perspective is that of eternity, for which life at every phase is a meaningful preparation. Old age too has a proper role to play in this process of gradual maturing along the path to eternity. And this process of maturing cannot but benefit the larger society of which the elderly person is a part.
Elderly people help us to see human affairs with greater wisdom, because life's vicissitudes have brought them knowledge and maturity. They are the guardians of our collective memory, and thus the privileged interpreters of that body of ideals and common values which support and guide life in society. To exclude the elderly is in a sense to deny the past, in which the present is firmly rooted, in the name of a modernity without memory. Precisely because of their mature experience, the elderly are able to offer young people precious advice and guidance.

In view of all this, the signs of human frailty which are clearly connected with advanced age become a summons to the mutual dependence and indispensable solidarity which link the different generations, inasmuch as every person needs others and draws enrichment from the gifts and charisms of all.

Prayer
God of all creation,
through Jesus, your Son,
You created man
in your own image and likeness,
to live and love as the crown of your creation.
Move our hearts to cherish the precious gift of life
at every stage and in every condition,
and especially when it is most vulnerable in the autumn of life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Extended silent prayer)

Defending the Lives of the Elderly

A Reflection from Saint John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in America (The Church in America)

Concern must be shown for the elderly, who are often neglected and left to fend for themselves. They must be respected as persons; it is important to care for them and to help them in ways which will promote their rights and ensure their greatest possible physical and spiritual well-being. [They] must be protected from situations or pressures which could drive them to suicide; ... they must be helped nowadays to resist the temptation of assisted suicide and euthanasia.

Prayer
Heavenly Father,
You willed that families would be created as the schools of love
where generations would learn to cherish and protect each other.
Give us the words to speak and the actions to take
that we might witness to your tender love for the elderly of our families
and strive always to serve their needs and defend their lives.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Extended silent prayer)

Euthanasia is Always an Intrinsically Evil Act

A Reflection from Saint John Paul II's Letter "To the Elderly"

Unfortunately, in recent years the idea of euthanasia has lost for many people the sense of horror which it naturally awakens in those who have a sense of respect for life. Certainly, it can happen that, when grave illness involves unbearable suffering, the sick are tempted to despair and their loved ones or those responsible for their care feel compelled by a misguided compassion to
consider the solution of "an easy death" as something reasonable. ... But euthanasia, understood as directly causing death, is another thing entirely. Regardless of intentions and circumstances, euthanasia is always an intrinsically evil act, a violation of God's law and an offense against the dignity of the human person.

A Reflection from Saint John Paul II's Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life)

Even when not motivated by a selfish refusal to be burdened with the life of someone who is suffering, euthanasia must be called a false mercy, and indeed a disturbing "perversion" of mercy. True "compassion" leads to sharing another's pain; it does not kill the person whose suffering we cannot bear. Moreover, the act of euthanasia appears all the more perverse if it is carried out by those, like relatives, who are supposed to treat a family member with patience and love.

**Prayer**

Author of all beauty, and source of all human dignity, we give you thanks for the wonders of your creation: for the beauty of the love of parents for their children, which forges a bond that is stronger than death. May this love be reciprocated in the hearts of all children. May it strengthen their will to make the sacrifices necessary to care for and comfort their parents in old age, until that last day, when we shall see you face to face, and know the splendor of your light for all eternity. For you are Lord, for ever and ever. Amen.

*(Extended silent prayer)*

**The Father's Love for His Most Vulnerable Sons and Daughters**

A Reflection from Saint John Paul II's "Address before the International Congress on Life-sustaining Treatments and Vegetative State"

I feel the duty to reaffirm strongly that the intrinsic value and personal dignity of every human being do not change, no matter what the concrete circumstances of his or her life. A man, even if seriously ill or disabled in exercise of his highest functions, is and always will be a man, and he will never become a "vegetable" or an "animal."... The loving gaze of God the Father continues to fall upon them, acknowledging them as his sons and daughters, especially in need of help.

**Prayer**

Father of mercies, look upon us in our weakness and make us strong. For in the face of death and destruction, selfishness, sin, and the darkness of the culture of death, our fear threatens to keep us from doing your will. Give us the grace to trust in your power. Make us rely on you alone, the God through whom all things were made, and give us a passion for the gift of life with which you have endowed us, and the Gospel of Life which is the foundation of our being. Through the dying and rising of your Son, give us strength and courage and joy in your name. We ask this through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(Extended silent prayer)*
A Civilization Worthy of Man’s Dignity

A Reflection from Saint John Paul II’s Letter "To the Elderly"

Honoring older people involves a threefold duty: welcoming them, helping them and making good use of their qualities. … There must be a growing conviction that a fully human civilization shows respect and love for the elderly, so that despite their diminishing strength they feel a vital part of society. … “The burden of age is lighter for those who feel respected and loved by the young.”

Prayer
Lord Jesus Christ,
May our love for one another be like your love upon the Cross:
sacrificial and total, and faithful until the end.
May our love for one another be like your rising from the dead:
life giving and glorious and reflective of your love for us.
Bless all families, Lord,
and bless the parents and grandparents who sacrificed so much
to provide a better life for their children and grandchildren.
May they live to see their children’s children
and glory with them in the wonders of your love.
For you are Lord, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Extended silent prayer)

The Lord's Prayer

At the conclusion of the final period of extended silence, the presiding minister then sings or says:

Now let us offer together the prayer our Lord Jesus Christ taught us:

All: Our Father…

Benediction

At the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer, the presiding minister goes to the altar, genuflects, and then kneels. As he kneels, "Tantum ergo" or another suitable Eucharistic song is sung, and he incenses the Blessed Sacrament. After the hymn is finished, he rises and sings or says:
Let us pray.

O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament have left us a memorial of your Passion,
grant us, we pray,
so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood
that we may always experience in ourselves
the fruits of your redemption.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
All: Amen.

After the prayer, the presiding minister puts on the humeral veil, genuflects, and takes the monstrance. He makes the sign of the cross with the monstrance over those gathered, in silence.

Reposition
After the blessing, the Blessed Sacrament is removed from the monstrance and brought to the place of reservation. Meanwhile, the presiding minister may lead those assembled in the Divine Praises. Each acclamation is repeated by all together.
Blessed be God.
Blessed be his holy Name.
Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.
Blessed be the Name of Jesus.
Blessed be his Most Sacred Heart.
Blessed be his Most Precious Blood.
Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.
Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.
Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.
Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.
Blessed be her glorious Assumption.
Blessed be the Name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.
Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse.
Blessed be God in his Angels and in his Saints.

After the Divine Praises are finished, an appropriate hymn is sung, and the presiding minister and the servers bow to the altar and leave.

1 Roman Missal, Mass for the Preservation of Peace and Justice, A., Prayer after Communion.

(samples taken from USCCB Holy Hours)

Holy Hours for Life can be planned for special occasions or on a monthly basis. Work with your pastor on the schedule.
Sample Intercessions for Life

For expectant mothers:
for the gifts of patient endurance and joyful hope;
We pray to the Lord:

For all little children,
and especially for toddlers:
that we might lead them to what is holy and true;
We pray to the Lord:

For children who have been abandoned or abused:
that God might teach us how to heal and protect them;
We pray to the Lord:

For all expectant families at Mass today:
that we might rejoice with them in the gift God brings us through their love;
We pray to the Lord:

For every boy or girl who has fallen in love:
that they might recognize the presence and power of God in their lives;
We pray to the Lord:

For those who have grown old and weak:
that we might see God’s power in their fragility;
We pray to the Lord:

For parents tempted to give up:
that God might give us the wisdom and determination to support and sustain them;
We pray to the Lord:

For those struggling with terrible diseases:
that each day might be a new revelation of God’s love for them;
We pray to the Lord:

For those tempted to despair by constant pain:
that they might join their suffering to the Cross of Christ;
We pray to the Lord:

For those for whom death is near:
that all their days of walking with the Lord might show them the way home;
We pray to the Lord:

For all who care for the dying:
that through the intercession of Saint John and the Blessed Virgin Mary, they might join themselves to the Cross of Christ;
We pray to the Lord:

For teachers in schools of medicine and nursing:
that their love for life and healing might inspire their students;
We pray to the Lord:

For all candidates for president:
that they might be moved by a love for the lives of those whom others would forget;
We pray to the Lord:

That the rule of law in this land might protect and preserve the lives of every person;
We pray to the Lord:

That as we prepare to vote, we might be ever-conscious of our responsibility to protect and nurture the lives of every unborn child;
We pray to the Lord:

For all who work for life:
that they might be assured of our gratitude and prayers for the holy work they do;
We pray to the Lord:

For medical researchers and all scientists:
that the holy work they do may ever be guided by God;
We pray to the Lord:
For all new doctors:  
for the grace of faith, courage, and love of life;  
We pray to the Lord:

For the homeless, the addict, the criminal and the sinner:  
that, like the Lord whose name we bear, we might seek them out;  
We pray to the Lord:

For every little child who is ill or in pain:  
that the beauty of their lives might bring patience and hope;  
We pray to the Lord:

For all children born today:  
that we might receive them as a sign of hope and of God’s never-ending care;  
We pray to the Lord:

For all who care for newborn children:  
that they may recognize the miracles they witness;  
We pray to the Lord:

For newly married couples:  
that the joy of newfound love may daily draw them closer to Christ;  
We pray to the Lord:

For mothers and fathers, who for the first time hold a child in their arms:  
that they might be transformed by the wonder they embrace;  
We pray to the Lord:

For each mother who has miscarried:  
that her love for the child of her womb might deliver her from grief and join her to the hope of the Cross of Christ;  
We pray to the Lord:

For pregnant teenagers:  
that we might provide examples for them of holy and faithful married love;  
We pray to the Lord:

Additional resources, such as the Word of life Series are available at:  
http://www.usccb.org/prolife/liturgy/wolarchive.shtml

Suggestions for Scripture Readings

Psalm 127  
Matthew 18:10-14  
Psalm 139  
Jeremiah 1:4-9  
Psalm 128  
John 10:7-21  
Ezekiel 33: 1-9  
Ephesians 3: 14-21  
Ephesians 4: 1-16  
Deuteronomy 30: 19, 20  
Genesis 1:26-31  
Luke 18:15-16
**Mass for Families and their Unborn Children**

A special Mass for families and their unborn children draws attention to the joy and anticipation of families and unborn life.

**Instructions**

- Talk to your pastor about the special Mass. Secure his permission and a day and time from him to schedule the Mass.
- Reserve the parish hall for a reception after the Mass and ask a parish organization to help with the reception.
- Plan and implement the promotion of the Mass. Bulletin announcements, bulletin inserts, posters, emails, and pulpit announcements are some ways to promote this within the parish. Start the promotion at least 3 weeks before the scheduled event.

A sample:

**Mass for Families and Their Unborn Children**

Are you expecting the birth of a new baby in your family? Our parish wants to celebrate with you the wonderous gift of life given to you by God. This special celebration will be on (date) at (time) in the church. A reception will follow for all parishioners in the parish hall. Please call (Name) at (phone number) for more details. All are invited to attend and share in this joyous time of anticipation with the families and their unborn child.

- Decide on a special gift for the mothers of the families, e.g. a medal, a holy card, a flower. Send a written invitation to families who signed up to come.
- Put together a booklet for the Mass with the help of your pastor or liturgical minister after the music and readings have been selected. Ask for the help of the choir and organist.
- Share the suggested prayers and blessings following these instructions with your pastor for possible use during the Mass.

**On the Day of the Mass**

- Have some volunteers prepare, set up and decorate the church and the parish hall before the Mass.
- Designate someone to seat the expectant families in specially marked and reserved pews. Designate someone else to hand out the booklets near the entrance.
- Ask one of the families to be the gift bearers.
- Have your pastor bless the special gifts during the Mass and distribute them to the families at a time he suggests during the Mass. At this time your pastor may also give the expectant families a special blessing.
- Have your pastor remind families about the reception to follow and thank everyone present for attending the event.
**Suggested Prayers**
The Prayer of the Faithful, Blessing 1 and Blessing 2 are reprinted from the Mass for Expectant Families outline distributed by the Office of Christian and Family Development of the Archdiocese of New York.

**Penitential Rite**
As we begin this liturgy in honor of the Holy Family, we reflect on our own family relationships, so that our homes may be filled with peace, love, and forgiveness.

Lord Jesus, Word of the Father, you have made your dwelling among us, Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Lord Jesus, born into a human family, you enriched our human love, Christ have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord Jesus, child of Mary and Joseph, you sanctified family life, Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

**Prayer of the Faithful Response: Lord of life, hear us.**
- For the safety, strength, and salvation of these expectant mothers, let us pray to the Lord.
- For the husbands, that they may give support to their wives and gain new peace and wisdom for their own calling, let us pray to the Lord.
- For all mothers, especially those gathered here today, that they may give new life to those already born, let us pray to the Lord.
- For our families, that they may find strength in the sharing of the Eucharist and enjoy peace and harmony in their hearts and homes, let us pray to the Lord.
- For God's Church everywhere, that it may understand its calling to be his family here on earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- For all those gathered here in hope and thanksgiving, that we may be faithful to our vocations, as priests, mothers, fathers, searchers, let us pray to the Lord.

**Blessing Prayer Before Offertory**
Celebrant: *God has given His angels charge over you.*
People: **To guard you in all your paths**
Celebrant: *Save these your servants who trust in you, O Lord.*
People: **And watch over them from heaven.**
Celebrant: *Send them aid from your Holy Place.*
People: **And do not let the power of evil harm them.**
Let Us Pray: Almighty everlasting God who by the childbearing of the Blessed Virgin Mary has brought joy to all Christian mothers, look with kindness on these your servants who come today to your holy dwelling to find your love and your strength. Be ready, O God, to give them your choicest blessing. May the children carried in their holy wombs come forth into this world in health and holiness. Together may these mothers and their children grow in devotion and life. Comforted by your protection and aided by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, may these mothers and their children and families find happiness here on earth and everlasting joy in the home prepared by you for them in the dwelling of eternity. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing Prayer After Communion
Celebrant: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Celebrant: O, Lord hear my prayer.
People: And let my cry come unto you.

Let Us Pray: Lord God, kind and merciful, Creator of all things, You have shown Your care and concern for all the works of Your hand. By the power of the Holy Spirit, You prepared for the body and soul of the glorious Virgin Mary to be a worthy dwelling for Your son. You filled John the Baptist with Your Holy Spirit causing him to leap with joy in his mother's womb. Look with love and compassion on these mothers, Your humble servants, who seek Your blessing for themselves and the child You have allowed them to conceive. Guard the life that is Yours. Insure the safety of their pregnancy. Let your gentle hand, O God, like that of a skilled physician aid them in their delivery. In the pains of their labor may they remember the promise of your joy. May the children of these good mothers come to the joyful experience of rebirth in the saving waters of Baptism. Like Jesus, Your Son, may the children soon to be born grow strong in wisdom, age, and grace before Your eyes. And may the blessings promised to the compassionate descend in abundance upon these expectant mothers and fill them, their husbands and their homes with your power, peace, and protection. We make our prayer through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.
LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY…
Ten Steps to Composing Persuasive Letters & Faxes

1. **Identify Yourself as a Constituent.** Put your name and complete address on both the envelope and the letter. Legislators will only feel compelled to respond to constituent mail, so it's important to establish immediately that you live in the district.

2. **Use Proper Forms of Address.** Address your lawmaker as "The Honorable." Also, be sure to get their title correct, e.g. Senator, Representative, Assembly member. Use "The Honorable" in the address and the office title in the salutation (Dear Senator Smith). Courtesy is important and will make the legislator or staff more receptive to your message.

3. **Be Brief and Simple.** Keep your letter to no more than two pages. Try to stay on one page. In the first paragraph, state your purpose and what you want. Avoid the temptation to be comprehensive in explaining the legislation and making all possible arguments.

4. **State (and Repeat) Your Position.** Make your position and/or request clear in both your opening and closing paragraphs. Be specific. State what action you want. If you want to advance a piece of legislation, say so. If you want to know the legislator's stand on an issue, ask what it is. If you want support on a particular issue, request support! Be sure to explicitly ask for your legislator's response to this request.

5. **Personalize Your Message.** A personal letter is much more effective than a form letter. While form letters, postcards, and petitions are read and counted, they don't carry the weight of a personalized, individual letter. Persuasive constituent mail humanizes issues by placing them in a local, personal context. When sample letters are provided for your use, incorporate your own words and personal perspective into the text.

6. **Be Polite and Avoid Ultimatums or Rudeness.** Everyone responds better to praise than criticism. Threats and ultimatums do little to convince a legislator to adopt your position. And, if a legislator does take the course of action that you suggest, send them a note of thanks. This will only help build your long-term relationship with the legislator/staff.

7. **Do Not Enclose Additional Material.** Additional reports or newspaper articles are rarely read or filed. If you have a particularly useful resource, mention it in your letter and offer to provide a copy upon request. Overwhelming an office with paper runs the risk of your letter being discarded along with the offending pile of paper.

8. **Do Not Exaggerate or Lie.** Stick to your facts and experiences. Stories or facts fabricated to prove your point only run the risk of undermining your credibility. Many legislators and staff become adept at spotting a tall tale.

9. **Make Your Message Timely.** Don't procrastinate. Your letter is not helpful if it arrives after a vote. Be aware of the legislative process (is the bill in committee or coming up for a vote on the floor) and time your letter accordingly.

10. **Keep a Copy of your Letter**
Tips for Sending Effective E-mail to Elected Officials

1. **Put Your Name and Address at the Top of Message.** The first thing your representative wants to determine is if you live in his or her district. If you don't Representatives and staff do not have any obligation and little time to read messages from people who are not constituents, so it is vital that you make it clear that you live in the district.

2. **Humanize Your Message.** This is one of the most important things you can do to ensure your e-mail makes an impact. Many people are uncomfortable sharing their feelings or talking about their own experiences, or believe that such information is inappropriate to the legislative process. Yet, it is this information that separates one's message from the standardized, bulk messages drafted by interest groups. These messages are more likely to be read than simply tallied.

3. **Be Brief.** Members of Congress and their staff are extremely busy. Respect their time and try to tell them only what they need to know. Two or three paragraphs should be sufficient. Do not feel that you have to make every single argument that relates to the issue, only the strongest points you can make.

4. **Be Clear About Your Position.** Your request should be stated as a concrete, actionable item, e.g., "I would like you to support H.R. 100."

5. **Make Your Message Timely.** Send your message when the legislation is being considered. Your message is worthless if it arrives after a critical vote.

6. **Don't "Flame."** You are allowed to disagree with your member of Congress, but you will not be effective if you abuse or threaten them. Abusive letters seem more desperate than intimidating to the recipient, and they are seldom taken seriously.

7. **Avoid Attachments.** Congressional offices rarely print or read attachments to e-mail. Offer to provide supporting documents on request, but avoid sending attached files.

8. **Don't Become "Spam."** Do not send Congress a message every single day about every issue you read about or develop an opinion on. An office that receives numerous messages from a single person quickly loses sight of the urgency or expertise that the constituent can bring to a specific issue.

9. **Establish Your Credibility.** Explain if you are an expert in some area. Also, do not shy away from saying that you are either a personal supporter or a party supporter (but never imply that because you voted for somebody or contributed money to their campaign that they owe you a vote).

10. **Don't Lie.** Political professionals are adept at spotting a tall tale. Any story that sounds too perfect or any statistic that is not substantiated will not bolster your position.
11. **Don’t cc Everybody.** Resist the urge to send a copy of your message to every member of Congress. You will persuade no one and annoy everybody. A legislative office wants to know that you have appealed to them for specific action, not just sent them a copy of a memo distributed to all.

12. **Proofread Your E-mail.** Too often the speed and ease of sending e-mail is reflected in poor grammar and sloppy spelling. Even if a congressional staffer is able to determine your meaning, such errors reflect badly on your overall argument. Take a break before you press "send," and proof your message.
Political Activity: Do’s and Don’ts for Parishes

Do’s
- Address the moral and human dimensions of public issues
- Share church teaching on human life, human rights and justice and peace.
- Apply Catholic Values to legislation and public issues.
- Conduct a non-partisan voter registration drive on Church property.
- Distribute unbiased candidate questionnaires, that have been approved by the diocesan attorney, covering issues of human life, justice and peace.
- If you have any questions, check with the diocesan attorney.

Don’ts
- Endorse or oppose candidates for political office.
- Distribute partisan campaign literature under church auspices.
- Arrange for groups to work for a candidate for public office.
- Invite only selected candidates to address your church-sponsored group.
- Conduct voter registration slanted toward one party.

For more ideas with regards to promoting Faithful Citizenship visit: http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship-document.cfm
Get Active!
Here are some ways to get your Respect Life Committees involved with the community.

Organizing a Bus Trip to the March for Life in Washington, DC

Running a bus trip to the annual March for Life in Washington, DC takes a significant amount of time, effort and coordination but can be a very rewarding experience for all who participate. For many, the bus trip is a journey towards deeper commitment to the cause of life. The March itself can be an energizing source of encouragement. The March is held on the fourth Friday in January each year which is near the anniversary of the infamous Supreme Court case Roe v. Wade in 1973 which legalized abortion.

The March has 3 components: 1) the rally which is held near the Washington monument, 2) the 1 ¼ mile march to the Supreme Court, 3) the lobbying effort when you visit your congressman’s office.

Financing the Trip
With the cost of gas renting a bus is quite expensive. You may need to consider doing fundraising well in advance of the trip. Selling “roses for life” on Respect for Life Sunday is a common fundraising effort. You may also consider contacting your local Knights of Columbus to get them involved. Often times several parishes will work together to share a bus.

Contact a local bus company to find out how much it will cost for the bus trip. You may want to shop around for the best price. It is also customary to tip the bus driver at the end of the trip. The bus is usually required to park at RFK Stadium. There is a small parking fee.

You may want to ask riders to pay a fee to help defray expenses. There are typically 49 seats on the bus and, of course, a full bus is always desired. The bus usually stops once on the way to Washington, DC and once on the way back for a quick food/bathroom break. It may be wise to ask your passengers to bring a bagged lunch and drinks and snacks for the ride. Sometimes the sponsors of the trip will provide coffee and donuts for the morning of the trip.

Once at RFK Stadium, the riders will need to enter the subway for a short ride to the rally site. The subway pass costs about $2.00 for a round trip. These can be purchased that day or in advance.
Specific information about the March for Life can be found at http://www.marchforlife.org/.

Steps in planning the Trip:
1. Contact the March for Life Committee and get on their mailing list. They will send information about the March such as starting time, routes, where to get subway passes and order forms for the March journal: March for Life Education and Defense Fund 1012 14th St, NW Suite 300 Washington DC 20005. Phone number: 202-234-3300.
2. Order the bus. This should be done sometime in October. If you can get one with a DVD player it helps to make the trip more enjoyable.
3. If you are planning a special Mass said that morning for the marchers, arrange for a priest to celebrate the Mass well in advance.
4. Organize a food committee to prepare for the trip such things as water, snacks, coffee and donuts.
5. Order subway passes. This will help you to avoid long lines the day of the March.
6. Place bulletin inserts in the parish bulletin announcing the trip and giving contact information for those who would like to go.
7. Make sure you let all those who register know that the trip is a long, cold day and that they should dress appropriately.

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SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY OF THE MARCH

6:00-6:30 Make coffee and set up.
6:30-7:00 Mass
7:00-7:30 Coffee/donuts and load bus.
7:30 Take role call. Bus departs
8:45 Lead a rosary for life. Use the bus microphone so all can hear.
9:30 Pit stop
9:30-9:45 Hand out maps and passes. Make announcements.
9:45 Show pro-life educational video.
11:00 Bagged Lunch.
11:45 Take subway to Rally site.
12:15 Listen to Rally speeches.
1:15  March forms. March approx. 1 ¼ miles to the Supreme Court Building.

2:45  Lobby at Congressional Offices.

4:30  Return to RFK Stadium via subway. Take role call. Bus departs for home.

5:00  Share experiences. Watch video.

7:00  Pit stop. Light dinner.

10:00 – 10:30  Arrive home. Clean up bus. Unload bus.

The group should attempt to stay together. Sometimes wearing all the same color hat or scarf can help identify group members. Make sure everyone knows the bus company and bus number before leaving RFK Stadium. Make sure everyone stays with a buddy at all times so no one gets lost.

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**Rally for Life in Trenton**

Some parishes and schools will run a bus trip to the Rally for Life in Trenton. This event is usually 11:00 am to 1 pm at the Statehouse Steps in Trenton. More information can be obtained by contacting New Jersey Right to Life at http://www.njrtl.org/. Many pro-life champions and state representatives speak at this rally.
Host a Pro-Life Speaker

As you know, there is a wide spectrum of pro-life issues such as: abortion, stem cell research, cloning, reproductive technologies, infertility, chastity, end-of-life issues, suicide, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide and the death penalty.

It is important to help educate our fellow Catholics, as well as the general public, about these issues.

You may wish to host a pro-life speaker to address one of these areas.

- Speak to your pastor about bringing in a speaker and schedule a date for an event.
- You may wish to bring a speaker to a parish group which already meets regularly to ensure a good turnout (ie: Rosary Altar Society, Men’s Club, Seniors’ Group, Youth Group). If so, contact the person in charge and discuss your idea.
- Contact your diocesan Respect Life Office to discuss what speakers are available and approved. Often the Respect Life Office will have a Speakers Bureau and can provide a list approved speakers and topics. It is important to make sure you check that the speaker you invite will adhere to the Church’s teaching on the topic being addressed.
- Publicize your event in the parish bulletin, with pulpit announcements, and through your committee’s social media. Purchase handouts which you can distribute at the event.
- Make sure to sign up volunteers from your committee to help with refreshments and set-up for the event.
- Prepare a sign-in sheet and an evaluation form so that you can discuss how effective the event was when it is over.
40 Days for Life

http://www.40daysforlife.com/
(excerpt from the 40 Days for Life website)

Take the leap of faith and get involved with 40 Days for Life

Have you been to pray at a 40 Days for Life vigil yet? You may ask, “What do I do?” or “What sign should I bring?” The answer is simple; the only thing you really need to bring is yourself, for you represent God’s love.

Before getting involved with the 40 Days for Life campaign, please remember that prayer and fasting are the foundation.

If there is no abortion facility in your town, praise God!

But wherever you are or whatever you're doing, you can pray to end abortion.

Prayer and Fasting:

You can also pray for God's guidance for those involved in prayer vigils and pro-life action around the country. And please consider fasting. Some people are unable to fast from food for health reasons; that's understandable. Fasting simply involves renouncing an activity that can put a barrier between you and God. It could be television, the internet, chocolate, coffee, etc. You really can do without it. Take the time you usually spend in those activities and give it back to God.

Constant Vigil:

The visible, public centerpiece of 40 Days for Life is a 40-day, round-the-clock prayer vigil outside a Planned Parenthood center or other abortion facility in your community.

Sometimes it is not possible to have 24/7 coverage at the 40 Days for Life site. Usually the coordinator will work out a schedule. Those who are called to stand witness maintain a peaceful and educational presence.

For more information and for locations and daily devotionals visit the 40 Days for Life website.
USCCB Respect Life Program Packets

The Respect Life Program begins anew each year on Respect Life Sunday, the first Sunday in October. The program is highlighted in liturgies and marked by special events. The USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities publishes a program packet each year to call attention to numerous human life issues. Each contains information on current issues, program suggestions, liturgy resources and clip art. It may also contain prayers for daily recitation and parish bulletin briefs. Published in booklet format from 1972 through 1992 and in "user-friendly" packet form since 1993, these materials are especially helpful for priests, parish groups, and other organizations.

Each year the diocesan Respect Life Office orders the program packets for each of the parishes. The packets are either mailed directly to the parish, to the parish representative or distributed at a diocesan meeting. Please contact your diocesan Respect Life Office for more information. Materials are also available in Spanish.

To order program packets from previous years, visit: http://www.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rlp/index.shtml.

Plan to order the Respect Life Program Flyers so that they can be used on Respect Life Sunday, which is the first Sunday of October as designated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Plan to post the Respect Life Program Poster in your Parish or School.

Sample poster 2018-2019
Fundraising

Baby Bottle Boomerang Fundraising Campaign

This project is a great way to raise funds to support your local crisis pregnancy center. Often time the local Knights of Columbus will plan this fundraiser. Before planning this project, consult with your local K of C chapter to see if they would like to work together on this effort. And, of course, make sure to get permission from your pastor to conduct this project. Pregnancy Help Centers are always looking for volunteers. Contact your local center to see how you can help!

It’s really simple…it’s called Baby Bottle Boomerang because you distribute empty baby bottles to church congregations and just like a well-tossed boomerang, they come back to you full of coins, currency and checks. And, the bottles can be used over and over again, creating an ongoing fundraising and promotional program within the church community.

The Baby Bottle Boomerang will help your organization to:

- Increase the numbers that hear your pro-life message.
- Elevate the awareness level of your ministry in the community.
- Raise significant funds with relatively low up front costs.

The Baby Bottle Boomerang is simple to conduct, effective in communicating your message, and very productive in raising much-needed funds, regardless of the size of the ministry. It is a simple, convenient way to reach the families and individuals in the churches. No extra meetings or time commitments are required of the participants.

Planning:

1) Obtain permission from your pastor at least two weeks before the fundraiser.
2) Order the baby bottles and print inserts. (there are numerous places that sell the bottles for this fundraiser such as: http://www.hh76.org/bottles/)
3) Place a bulletin announcement in the parish bulletin the week before and put inserts in each bottle.
4) Pro-life volunteers and K of C members should stand at each exit with a supply of bottles to offer one bottle to each family after church.
5) The following week volunteers should be at each entrance with the cartons to receive the bottles before people enter Church. As some people will forget
their bottles, ask to leave a container in the church so people can return their bottles throughout the following week.

6) Count all monies from the bottles, record name and address of all checks so that Crisis Pregnancy Center will be able to mail a thank-you and also develop a mailing list. Refurbish bottles (with new inserts and replacement labels where required). Biggest months are October (respect life month) and January (Anniversary of Roe v Wade). Plan for fund-raisers with elementary schools throughout the year, and with churches wherever possible.
Post Abortion Healing Resources

*Whenever you speak about abortion speak about the forgiveness and healing.*

As Parish Pro-Life Representatives it is important to promote these post abortion healing ministries using bulletin inserts and promotional flyers. Please make sure you are familiar with what the ministry is all about so you can easily refer people in need.

**RACHEL'S VINEYARD**

*(A Psychological and Spiritual Journey of Post-Abortion Healing)*

Rachel's Vineyard is a weekend retreat for post-abortive men and women, created by Dr. Teresa Karminski-Burke, Ph.D. It is a beautiful opportunity for healing and reconciliation for any man or woman who has struggled with the emotional or spiritual pain of an abortion. During the weekend, we gather as the suffering Body of Christ, and minister to each other in His name. We focus on God's forgiveness, compassion and mercy. There are psychological exercises which help work through repressed grief and anger and many spiritual exercises to help you grieve the loss of your unborn child and accept God's forgiveness. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is also available. The retreat concludes with a Memorial Service and Mass of Resurrection.

The following are excerpts from women who have attended Rachel's Vineyard Weekend:

"I experienced a great inner healing as a result of attending the post-abortion retreat. I would highly recommend this retreat to any woman who has felt the void and shame of the abortion experience. It is a wonderful way to forgive yourself, find the unconditional love of Christ and grieve the loss of your little child."

"To any women considering the need to reconcile their abortion, the retreat is a wonderful gift you could give to yourself. You are able to experience the sadness, grief, and shame in the company of other women and men feeling very much of the same. You are able to turn this pain into hope among nurturing counselors and supportive caretakers. You are not rushed or hurried, but given time to reflect and open to the healing process gradually. In the spirit of penance and reconciliation this retreat addresses the pain and suffering of women who feel their sin of abortion has outcast them from their church and their faith."

"I was terrified to take that first step forward and participate in Rachel's Vineyard. It seemed safer to remain hiding in the darkness, keeping the pain locked up deep inside rather than to risk exposing my shame to another soul. Now I am grateful to have experienced God's healing and forgiveness with other women in an atmosphere of complete acceptance and trust, Rachel's Vineyard has been a blessing to me."

"I recommend this retreat for anyone seeking closure of an abortion experience that has
felt unresolved. This retreat has made me remember that my abortion was the instrument of my conversion, and that if I can accept that my baby loves me, I can realize that God loves me too. Spiritually I am a lot less empty and restless, and have more peace than before these experiences on the retreat. I've also become less isolated with what I have suffered."

“For 18 years I have been haunted with heavy guilt that no one could take away, tormented by thoughts of what that child would have been like. Through participating in Rachel’s Vineyard, I was finally able to forgive myself. I know that God has given me a peaceful mind, cleansed my heart and has washed away my guilt.”

If you (or a friend) are hurting from an abortion please call the Respect Life Office. Information about weekends across the nation can be found by calling 1-877-HOPE 4 ME.

Spanish resources also available.
Call 973-497-4350 option 2
e-mail elvinedoderaquelinfo@rcan.org

Silent No More

Join in their mission to raise awareness about abortion's adverse effect on society.
https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/

Entering Canaan Ministry

Entering Canaan Ministry is devoted to healing after abortion. They offer many different programs catered to mothers, fathers, and siblings who suffer from the pains of abortion. Some of the programs include: Men’s retreats, Women’s retreats, Sibling Retreats, counseling, prayer services, and more. They are a nationwide organization dedicated to bringing Christ’s message of mercy to all victims of the abortion industry. More information may be found at their website: https://www.enteringcanaan.com/home

Grief to Grace

“Through a retreat program facilitated by mental health professionals and centered on Jesus Christ, Grief to Grace helps those who have endured physical, emotional, and/or spiritual abuse find healing. Grief to Grace has served thousands across the United States and around the world since 2005.” http://grief-to-grace-lsi.squarespace.com/
Additional Important Resources:

Being pro-life extends to all walks of life. Life is a gift from God deserving of the inherent dignity He grants it and we are called to protect, cherish, and care for this gift. Below are additional resources that work to protect life and promote Christ’s loving message of hope to all.

The Mercy House

“Is a resource and referral center that strives to create a comfortable environment in which to meet people and provide material resources that will allow women in crisis or unplanned pregnancies to keep their babies and care for their families. Forming this type of supportive relationship, we hope, will encourage them to participate in healing ministries.” - New Jersey Catholic

https://www.rcan.org/respect-life/mercy-house

You may also contact the Mercy house through:
email: mercyhouseinfo@rcan.org
phone: 973-643-8000 or 973-497-4350

Courage International

“Courage International is a prayer and support ministry of the Catholic Church for men and women struggling with same sex attraction who desire to live a chaste life according to the teachings of the Church.”

https://couragerc.org/

Resources to assist addiction:
Grupo Manhattan

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**Do you want to stop using drugs or know of someone who has a problem with drugs?**

**“FREE SERVICES”**
A drug addict, not only does he destroy his life he ignores it!
COME WE CAN HELP YOU!

Grupo Manhattan
171 Market Street, Staten Island, NY 10310
daamerica.org
718-507-7459