Pro-Life Manual
For
Parish Pro-Life Representatives

Office for Social Concerns
Diocese of Springfield in Illinois
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Dear Parish Pro-Life Coordinator,

I am happy to share with you our new Pro-Life manual that was compiled by our diocesan pro-life committee under the direction of the Office for Social Concerns staff. This manual will provide you with some helpful tips and suggestions that can be utilized within your parish.

In the Catholic Church, we “proclaim that human life is a precious gift from God; that each person who receives this gift has responsibilities toward God, self, and others; and that society, through its laws and institutions, must protect and nurture human life at every stage of its existence.” (Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities p.1) By our pro-life efforts we continue to help others, and through God’s grace, will come to a better understanding of what it means to value, protect, nurture, and serve life.

The purpose of this manual is to give you and your pro-life committee members a reference guide for pro-life activities within your parish. This manual is not a detailed blueprint, but will provide enough useful information to help your pro-life committee throughout the year.

I ask that this manual be used within the framework of the parish, in consultation with the pastor and/or parish life coordinator. All parishioners will benefit from the pro-life work of the Church.

May God continue to bless you, and the efforts of your parish, to protect the sanctity of all human life.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend George J. Lucas
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois
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Pro-Life Manual Acknowledgement

This Pro-Life manual arises from the need to continue to proclaim the Pro-Life message of the Catholic Church. This manual is being provided to you, free of charge, from the Diocesan Office for Social Concerns which is funded by the Annual Catholic Services Appeal (ACSA). The Diocesan Pro-Life Committee was very instrumental in helping to assemble this great source of information.

Our hope is that this Pro-Life Manual will be used by the parish Pro-Life Committee to assist with ideas and activities. Many of these ideas and suggestions are provided for you from other dioceses’ and Pro-Life Organizations from around the country. We would like to acknowledge and thank these groups for their support and guidance in compiling this information for the manual. The groups and organizations providing this support are as follows:

- The Office for Pro-Life Activities for the Diocese of Austin Texas
- A Pro-Life Primer *The ABC’s of Working in the Parish* by Joyce Lively – Published by The Regina Coeli Institute
- Priests for Life
- Elliot Institute
- Springfield Diocesan Office for Family and Youth Ministry
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Department of Pro-Life Activities

We hope that you will utilize this wonderful Pro-Life Manual. If there is information and activities that you would like to suggest, please send them into the Diocesan Office for Social Concerns and we will attempt to share them with other Pro-Life Committees within the diocese. We plan to have this manual on our web site and make changes to it as needed. Please feel free to check out the diocesan web site at:


May God continue to bless your efforts to educate others in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois on the sacredness of all human life from conception until natural death!

Diocesan Office for Social Concerns
Diocesan Pro-Life Committee
Diocese of Springfield in Illinois
Diocesan Prayer for Life

Holy Mary, Mother and Virgin pray for us and our nation.

Loving God, Creator of all, we recognize that life is a gift from you. Open our hearts to your Holy Spirit and renew in us a deep respect for all persons: the family, the unborn, the young, the adult, the sick, the disabled, the abused, the imprisoned, the aged, the dying, the homeless, the unemployed, and the oppressed in any way.

Bless all of us in our diocese and instill in us a deep love for your gift of life.

Through the intercession of Mary, Mother and Virgin, may all our words and actions foster reverence for human life.

May we be true witnesses to the truth that all life is precious and has sublime dignity. Lead our nation and our world to this understanding so that we may be a people dedicated to the protection of all yours sons and daughters.

We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ, the Word who became flesh and lived among us.

Amen
4. Getting Organized

1. Organizational Chart
2. The importance of the Parish
3. Your Relationship with the Pastor and the Parish
4. Job Descriptions
5. Duties of the Pro-Life Coordinator and Committee
6. When planning an Activity on the parish level...
7. Checklist for Parish Pro-Life Coordinator and Committee
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Local Bishop
Most Rev. George J. Lucas
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois

Parish Pastor / Parish Life Coordinator

Vicar General – Moderator of the Curia

Office for Social Concerns

Parish Pro-Life Coordinator
and Committee

Receiving Guidance, Information and Legislation From

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

Bishops’ Committee for Pro-Life Activities

National Committee for a Human Life Amendment (NCHLA)

Catholic Conference of Illinois (CCI)
The Importance of the Parish

Your parish is “what’s happening’ when it comes to faith expression, community, formation and growth in the spiritual life. Most parishioners relate to the local parish community more than the diocesan or universal church. Do not underestimate the importance of the local parish community, your involvement, and your role to build up God’s kingdom. Sociologists tell us that two percent of the people in a community can make a difference to bring about a change in the community. The same is true for a parish community.

You can make a difference!

In our present social context, marked by a dramatic struggle between the “culture of life” and the “culture of death,” there is need to develop a deep critical sense, capable of discerning true values and authentic needs.

What is urgently called for is a general mobilization of consciences and a united ethical effort to activate a great campaign in support of life. All together, we must build a new culture of life.

- Pope John Paul II,
  *The Gospel of Life, no. 95*
Your Relationship with the Pastor and the Parish

The Pro-Life Ministry within your parish should increase the awareness of respect life issues for parishioners, but how these issues are received may depend to some extent on your relationship with the pastor, the parish staff, and the community.

Some helpful hints include:

1. **Your involvement** in various aspects of parish life is important. Your participation in liturgical ministries will give you visibility. Your involvement in parish meetings, religious education, parish festivals, etc. will give you credibility as a concerned, committed, responsible leader in the parish community. If you help others, they in turn will help you to work on your projects and activities.

2. **Your spiritual life** is an important part of your effectiveness. If you are a person of prayer, a person that is faith-filled, the Spirit will work through you to build up the kingdom. Let prayer be the foundation and source of your ongoing strength and hope.

3. **Be a team person.** Delegate. To accomplish your goals and activities you will need the cooperation of many other people. Involve others in your planning and implementation. You can make a greater difference if you work as a team person.

4. **How does the pastor perceive you?** Are you perceived as the type of person mentioned above? Are you well organized? Do you have a track record of “having followed through”? Are the planned activities going to be more work for the pastor? Are you and others assuming the responsibility of implementing the plans in cooperation with the pastor?

5. **Being committed includes an ongoing commitment to read and be informed** of respect life issues as well as Catholic Church teachings and current events of importance. It is important to stay informed and abreast of the latest news on life issues and where the Church stands and to educate the parish on these issues. Vehicles for education are speakers, the parish bulletin and brochures.

6. **Some of your activities may be liturgical.** Work with the liturgy committee if your parish has one. Advance planning is crucial. Surprises generally do not work when it comes to liturgical events. Recognition of life issues through Mass celebrations, prayer services, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and rosaries are an excellent way to raise awareness.

7. **Funding of Activities.** If the parish has an annual budget, request a reasonable amount to cover the cost of planned activities. Fund raising activities that do not conflict with parish activities also give parishioners the opportunity to support Pro-Life efforts. Parish organizations such as the Knights of Columbus are often willing to help contribute toward expenses.
Office for Social Concerns Description

The Office for Social Concerns is a curia office of the Catholic Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, under the direction, guidance and authority of Bishop George J. Lucas and funded by the Annual Catholic Services Appeal. It receives information and direction from the Pro-Life Secretariat of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, located in Washington D.C. and works to implement the Bishop’s Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities recently revised in November 2001.

The Office for Social Concerns works to instill respect for human life from conception to natural death and to bring about a conversion of heart and mind for all to be open to God’s special gift of life. The Office for Social Concerns reflects the Church’s firm conviction of the dignity of each and every human life. The Office for Social Concerns serves to raise awareness of life issues; to educate, minister and encourage a prayerful spirituality among the faithful. Advocacy, such as postcard campaigns and letter writing, is always in accordance with the USCCB. Post-abortion Ministry, Project Rachel, is an apostolate of the Office for Social Concerns.

Each pastor is encouraged to appoint a parish Pro-Life Coordinator to serve as a resource person for the parish, to form a parish Pro-Life Committee and to network with other parishes and the diocese to promote greater respect for all human life.

Parish Pro-Life Coordinator Description

A Parish Pro-Life Coordinator serves both the parish and the diocese in a voluntary manner. The Parish Pro-Life Coordinator works in cooperation with the pastor and a Parish Pro-Life Committee on the parish level to raise awareness and to educate on the life issues according to Church teaching. The Parish Pro-Life Coordinator implements specific projects or requests sent from the diocesan office with the permission of the pastor. The Parish Pro-Life Coordinator is a living example of the Gospel of Life within the parish.

Parish Pro-Life Committee Member Description

The Parish Pro-Life Committee consists of individuals who collaborate with the Parish Pro-Life Coordinator to organize events and activities. Committee members are also living examples of the Gospel of Life within the parish.
**Duties of the Parish Pro-Life Coordinator and Committee**

**Parish Pro-Life Coordinator**

1. Communicates with and reports directly to the pastor
2. Receives information from the Office for Social Concerns
3. Refers to the Parish Pro-Life Coordinator’s Handbook for activities and ideas
4. Recruits committee members (pastor may offer assistance)
5. Delegates jobs to committee members
6. Schedules regular committee meetings and sets the agenda
7. Chairs the committee meetings
8. Oversees all parish Pro-Life activities
9. Prays for God’s help in all endeavors
10. Is a living example of the Gospel of Life

**Parish Pro-Life Committee**

“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 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” *(Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities-USCCB- p. 36 - 2001).*

**May consist of 2 groups or committees:** Activities and Advisory

**Activities Committee:**
1. Available to help at most activities
2. Attends Parish Pro-Life Events
3. Attends Diocesan Pro-Life Events

**Advisory Committee:**
1. Meets regularly with the parish coordinator
2. Generates ideas and helps to implement plans
3. Divided into subcommittees to concentrate on these certain areas: 
   - **Education** - **Pastoral** - **Spiritual** - **Public Policy**
4. Other possible jobs: refreshment person and telephone person
5. Available to help at most activities
6. Attends both parish and diocesan Pro-Life events
When planning an activity on the parish level...

I Will...
1. Pray for God’s divine intervention for help.
2. Organize my thoughts or research how the activity was done at another parish.
3. Mention the idea to others to see what kind of a response they have.
4. Make an appointment to meet with my pastor/parish life coordinator.
5. Present the idea to my pastor/parish life coordinator in an organized manner and ask for their ideas and input.
6. When doing an activity, involve others and be open to their ideas.
7. Afterwards, ask your pastor/parish life coordinator if they were pleased with the activity and what change they might suggest. (Can we do it next year?)
8. Thank God for being with you, helping you and allowing you to serve.

Remember...
Yes, what you do is important, but the manner and attitude that you have when you do it is much more important. This is what will truly turn the hearts of men and women and this is why all of your efforts must begin and end with prayer.

And...
Don’t allow discouragement to choke out your enthusiasm, just keep moving and praying.
### Checklist for a Parish Pro-Life Coordinator

- Is there a Parish Pro-Life Committee?
- Do you delegate the work or provide opportunities for others to get involved?
- Are monthly/quarterly meetings held for the Parish Pro-Life Committee?
- Do you have a good working relationship with your pastor/parish life coordinator?
- Do you have a cheerful and joyous attitude towards pro-life work?
- Do you provide quotes from encyclicals or bishop pastoral letters in the parish bulletin?
- Are intercessory prayers for life included at weekend liturgies?
- Is Project Rachel advertised in the bulletin and around the parish?
- Do you have at least one activity per year that helps pregnant women in need?
- Do you advertise Diocesan Pro-Life events and activities in your bulletin and try to attend?
- Do you plan Pro-Life prayer opportunities for your parish?
- Do you personally invite others to join you at meetings or activities?
- Do you understand the Church teachings on the life issues?
- Do you clarify the Church teachings to others as needed?
- Do you try to educate others about the other life issues (i.e. stem-cell research, death penalty, end of life decision making etc….)?
- Do you have a change in leadership on the parish Pro-Life Committee every few years?
5. Activities that follow the Liturgical or Secular Calendar

1. A Novena to Our Lady of Sorrows (September - 9 Days for Life)
2. Blessing of Roses (October Respect Life Sunday/Month)
3. Tree of Hope (Advent)
4. Christmas Card and Ornament Sale (Nov / Dec)
5. National Night of Prayer for Life (December 8th - Feast of the Immaculate Conception)
6. Information and Prayer (December 12th – Feast of our Lady of Guadalupe)
7. Christmas Day Prayer for Life (December 25th – Birth of Jesus Christ our Lord)
8. Rite for Miscarriages (December 28th – Feast of the Holy Innocents)
9. Prayer for the Feast of the Holy Family (Sunday after Christmas)
10. The Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (January 1st)
11. Prayer for Peace (January 1st and throughout the year)
13. Blessing of Infants, Babies & Children (February 2nd - Feast of the Presentation)
14. Blessing of mothers before Childbirth (March 25th - Feast of the Annunciation)
15. Mother’s Day Blessing (May – Mother’s Day) (English and Spanish)
16. Prayer for Farmers (May 15th – Feast of St. Isidore the Farmer)
17. Father’s Day Blessing (June – Father’s Day) (English and Spanish)
9 Days for Life
A Novena to Our Lady of Sorrows

by Rev. James Moroney
Executive Director
NCCB Secretariat for the Liturgy

At times, it seems that life is threatened on all sides. Let us pray for the nine days between September 7 and September 15 (the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows), we pray for the intercession of Mary, the Mother of our Life, our Faith and our Hope.

A Novena for Life

God, come to my assistance.
Lord, make haste to help me.
Glory to the Father,
and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

A Reading from the Bible


Holy Mother of God, hear the prayers of the Church for all mothers, especially those wearied by life and overcome by the suffering they bear for their children.
Hail Mary...
O Mother of the Word Incarnate, intercede for them from your place in heaven, that the mercy of your divine Son might lighten their burden and give them strength.
Hail Mary...
Glory to the Father....

"As we contemplate this Mother, whose heart 'a sword has pierced' (cf. Lk 2:35), our thoughts go to all the suffering women in the world, suffering either physically or morally. In this suffering a woman's sensitivity plays a role, even though she often succeeds in resisting suffering better than a man. It is difficult to enumerate these sufferings; it is difficult to call them all by name. We may recall her maternal care for her children, especially when they fall sick or fall into bad ways; the death of those most dear to her; the loneliness of mothers forgotten by their grown-up children; the loneliness of widows; the sufferings of women who struggle alone to make a living; and women who have been wronged or exploited. Then there are the sufferings of consciences as a result of sin, which has wounded the woman's human or maternal dignity: the wounds of consciences which do not heal easily. With these sufferings too we must place ourselves at the foot of the Cross."
-- Pope John Paul II (Mulieris Dignitatem, 21)
day 1 – Sept. 7  Pray for the Suffering Women of the World
Labor Day usually brings to mind images of factory workers, farmers or heavy equipment operators. Yet we also use labor to describe the first work which brought each one of us to birth: those first hours of maternal sacrifice which brought us into the world. It's too easy to forget that and all the other sacrifices which the vocation of motherhood entails. Pray for the mothers "in labor" today. Those who give birth. Those who work two jobs to support a child. Those who "go without" so their child's needs are met. Those whose patient endurance is a sign of God's love upon the Cross.

day 2 – Sept. 8 The Birth of the Virgin Mary - Pray for Mothers who will Give Birth Today
"At first I was scared," Sarah told me. "I was scared, excited and filled with the most incredible expectation. It was like those words we hear at Mass: we wait in joyful hope. I thought of all those women who feel the first kick, the stirrings of life deep within them. I prayed for them, that they would love their child, cherish their little baby and know that in being a mother they are involved in something so much bigger than themselves. They have been chosen by God to be custodians of the mystery of life. At first I was scared, and then I just cried ... with joy."

day 3 – Sept. 9 Pray for Fathers at the Birth of their Child
"At first I was petrified," Jon told me. "Petrified that I would faint or get in the way or not know what to do to help Sarah. But then I prayed to Mary. I know, praying to Mary is something you'd think a mother would be doing. But somehow, I think Mary understood Saint Joseph more than anyone else. She probably saw the fear in his eyes and sensed the restlessness of his heart. She probably spent a lot of time praying for him as well. And when I prayed to Mary for my child about to be born, I knew she understood and heard me and prayed for me to her son. At first I was petrified, and then I put everything into God's hands."

day 4 – Sept. 10 Pray for All Children
The eyes of a child are an infinite well of life, hope and goodness. If you doubt the value of life, look into the eyes of a child. If you are worn by life's worries, look into the eyes of a child. If you want to see tomorrow, look into the eyes of a child. And what you will see is the divine spark which brought beauty out of chaos, the infinite beauty, which is the presence of the Creator in his creation.

day 5 – Sept. 11 Pray for Families
I know of a family which prays each night. Since the kids were little they are gathered from their games and their grumbling to the couch in the living room. There they pray for those whom they love and those they have a hard time loving. They pray for the unborn and for little babies. They pray for the sick and the dying. They pray for the Church and for their priest. Many a night it was the knowledge of those prayers that gave me hope and peace and a good night's sleep.
day 6 – Sept. 12  *Prayer for Life Begins in the Home*
I know of another family which used to pray for unborn children every Friday night. They chose Friday because that's when Christ, innocent and without sin, was sent to the cross. There's no prayer more powerful than that said over little folded hands asking God to "take care of all the babies who you've made."

day 7 - Sept. 13  *The importance of Sunday*
Sunday is a time to take stock. We look all around us at Church and see them: all the people whose kids never seem to scream and who look like they haven't a problem in the world! But what if we really knew them? We would see the 'secret sufferings' that mirror our own. That's the meaning of Sunday, after all. It is the gathering of those who have looked at their own brokenness through the lens of the cross, and live! Sunday is the perfect day to pray for all God's broken children and especially those who are tempted to break the lives of others.

day 8 - Sept. 14  *The Holy Cross*
Each time I pray, I am called to join my prayer with Christ's perfect prayer upon the cross. It is easy from the vantage of the cross to see the world clearly. To see how easy it is to join the suffering of the innocent to the suffering of him who is without sin. We should work for an end to all the forms of violence which threaten life. That is a wonderful good. But it is even more important to stand with the Virgin Mother and to beg her Son to come to our aid.

day 9 – Sept. 15  *Our Lady of Sorrows*
We end as we began nine days ago: with Mary, weeping silently beside the Cross. Weeping for the innocent child so violently taken. Weeping for the nation which has let him die. Weeping for her child and for ourselves, we place them both in her arms.
Respect Life Sunday
(October) – Blessing of Roses

Long stem red roses may be purchased in bulk for a reasonable price at a wholesaler by someone who has a floral license.

Set the roses in a prominent location, preferably in front of the altar before Mass. Baskets for donations may be set in front of the flowers if you wish to offset their cost. Prayers cards may be made in advance to give out with the roses. The prayer card we made had a message printed on pink paper with a rose in the background. The card was laminated, hole punched and decorated with a pink bow made out of yarn. The message on the card said:

*This flower is a message of love. Its delicateness and loveliness reflect the beauty and goodness of creation and life. Its thorns symbolize the pain and obstacles we must face throughout our earthly existence. Know that Jesus loves you with His whole heart and through this flower He shows His special love for you.*

When it is time for the blessing some children may come and stand by the roses to hand out the messages on the cards to everyone who takes a rose. The priest rises to bless the roses. (A soft instrumental can be played in the background during the blessing.)

_Priest:_ Praise to you, Lord our God, Father and Creator of human life. You have made us in Your image and likeness, with a mind and heart to love You above all things. Help us to remember that whatever we do for our brother, especially the least and helpless, we are actually doing for Your son, who lives and works in and through us. Teach us to love and nurture one another. Give us wisdom and courage to defend and protect human life. Inspire us to remember that without You, Lord, we are powerless.

Lord, we ask that you bless these roses which are a symbol of life. Most delicate and loveliest of flowers, these roses reflect the beauty and goodness of creation and life. But, also with thorns, symbolize the pain and obstacles we must all face in order to grow closer to You.

(Priest blesses the roses with holy water)
These flowers are a message of love to be given to an elderly neighbor, a handicapped person, an expectant mother, someone sick or grieving. If you know of someone who is hurting, please come and get a blest rose and take it home to them. A card with a special message on it is available to go along with the rose. Please come and take a rose for someone in need. The basket is for donations to help defray the cost of the roses.
Advent Project

A Tree of Hope

Identify a needy organization within your community to be the recipient of items ranging in price from $1 to $15.00. Organizations to consider are crisis pregnancy centers, nursing homes, shelters, maternity homes, Catholic Charities special projects and other researched projects in the community. Contact the organization about your project and ask them for particular items on their “Wish List”. A list could include toiletry items for adults – soap, shampoo, tooth brush/tooth paste, deodorant, razors, lotion and personal items for babies – diapers, undershirts, underwear, socks, Desitin, baby powder, baby lotion, etc…

Make stars out of purple and pink paper (advent colors). On one side print the message:

The Joy of Hope
The joy in Life is found in loving, in giving, in serving,
In being a strong hand in the dark to another in their time of need,
In being a cup of strength to any soul in a crisis of weakness.
Like a star, let us radiate your joy to others.
Through this, our joy, we bring HOPE.

Print an item on the back side and then laminate the star (if possible). Punch a hole in top of the star and string a piece of purple or pink yarn through the hole for hanging purposes. Obtain a pine or fur tree and place it in a noticeable and prominent location at your church. Make a sign that says “TREE of HOPE” and hang it close to the top of the tree. Decorate the tree with the stars. Be sure to make more stars than will cover the tree, so that you may replace them as they are picked off.

Announce the “TREE of HOPE” with an announcement from the pulpit and in the bulletin. A sample announcement is below:

A TREE of HOPE

A Tree of Hope, tagged with stars, will be in the main entry of the church during the season of Advent. Each star will have an item that can be used by people in need. You may take home a star, obtain the item, and return the item with the tag to be placed under the tree. The item will then be given to the already designated organization which assists people in need. During this season, we joyously anticipate the coming of the Christ child, let us offer hope to those living in crisis and desperation.
ADVENT PROJECT
Christmas Card and Religious Ornament Sale

Combine fundraising with raising awareness by selling items with a religious theme or respect life message during the season of Advent in preparation for the birth of the baby Jesus. Christmas cards which have a religious theme and Pro-Life message are popular. Christmas ornaments and other decorations, with a religious theme, are nice to sale along with the Christmas cards.

Heritage House 76, www.hh76.com, has Christmas cards available for fundraisers. All of their proceeds are donated to Pro-Life work. A portion of your purchase goes to help support pro-life groups, pregnancy help centers, and maternity homes. All cards are printed on Bristol stock in full-color lithography. There is a biblical verse on the inside page. The back page of each card reads: “Sending this card helps to protect the lives of innocent human beings, born and unborn.” Cards are approximately 4-1/2 by 6-1/2 in. folded, shrink-wrapped with ten cards and ten envelopes per package. A brochure is available by simply calling 1-800-858-3040.

A catalog from Autom, Inc. www.automgifts.com, a religious articles company, may be ordered by simply calling their toll free phone number 1-800-572-5258. This company sells a variety of religious Christmas cards, decorations and items in quantity at reasonable prices. To request a catalog go to: www.automgifts.com/catalogrequest.jsp

Schedule the fundraiser for at least two consecutive weekends during Advent. Place an announcement in the parish bulletin a week before the Christmas card and ornament sale, and then also for the following weekends of the sale. Prepare a pulpit announcement for the weekends for the sales. A sample bulletin and pulpit announcement follows:

CHRISTMAS CARD AND ORNAMENT SALE

Beautiful, colorful religious Christmas cards will be available after all Masses on the weekend of ______ and _______. All Christmas decorations with a religious theme will also be on sale. All proceeds will go toward _______. Please stop by the table located ______ and support the parish Pro-Life efforts.

After the sale, place a thank you in the parish bulletin to those who bought items at the sale.
The National Night of Prayer for Life takes place each year on December 8th, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Churches are requested to invite the faithful to pray in unison with others throughout our country in Eucharistic adoration between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m. on the evening of December 8th and the early morning hour of December 9th. Those in attendance are asked to pray for an end to abortion in our country and to ask for reparation for the sins that have been committed against the unborn. The hours – 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. – were chosen to coincide with the time in which Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to Juan Diego. The four-hour time frame was chosen because of the four time zones in the United States.

**Purpose of activity:** To unite our prayers with Catholics throughout the country in an effort to help bring the world to Christ and to bring an end to abortion.

**Directions:**

1. Arrange with your pastor to have exposition and benediction.
2. Use a promotional flier to publicize the event at your parish.
3. Contact various parish groups – Knights of Columbus, Catholic Daughters, the Council of Catholic Women, RCIA, PSR Classes – and ask them to cover one of the hours and lead the prayers at that time.
4. One week before the event place the promotional flier or the following notice in the parish bulletin and use as a pulpit announcement at the Sunday Masses:

   **On, _____, December 8 from 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., our parish will participate in the National Night of Prayer for Life. The Purpose is to unite our prayers with Catholics throughout the country in an effort to help bring the world to Christ and to bring an end to abortion. All are invited to spend time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.**

5. Have sufficient copies of the prayers for each hour available as people enter the church.

**Suggested Prayers:** A litany for life, rosary for life and other appropriate prayers that can be used for Eucharistic adoration. Many of these prayers, and others for life, can be found at the Priests for Life Website at: [www.priestforlife.org](http://www.priestforlife.org)
Fr. Frank Pavone, Founding Director, Priests for Life

A Surprising Image

If you are involved in the pro-life movement for any length of time, you will encounter the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. There are many connections between this particular image of Our Lady and the pro-life cause.

On December 12, 1531, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to an Indian named Juan Diego and requested that a shrine be built and dedicated to her on the Hill of Tepeyac. Juan Diego, upon reporting this event to the bishop, was disappointed because the bishop didn't seem to believe him. Juan returned to the place of the apparition where Our Lady again appeared. She told him to return the next morning when she would give him a sign that would convince the bishop of the truth of her appearance and her request.

The following morning Our Lady told Juan to go to the top of the hill and gather Castilian roses that he would find there. Although he knew that only cactus grew there, he obeyed, and his simple faith was rewarded by the sight of beautiful roses growing where she had told him they would be. He gathered them and showed them to Our Lady who rearranged them for him. Juan returned to the bishop. As he opened his tilma (a type of pancho), the roses fell to the floor. All who were present were startled to see an image of Our Lady on the tilma. Today this image is still preserved on Juan Diego's tilma, which hangs over the main altar in the basilica at the foot of Tepeyac Hill just outside of Mexico City. In the image, Our Lady is pregnant, carrying the Son of God in her womb. Her head is bowed in homage, indicating that she is not the Goddess, but rather the one who bears and at the same time worships the one true God. Many articles have been written on dozens of other theological lessons drawn from the details of the image.

When asked who the lady was, Juan replied in his Aztec dialect, "Te Coatlaxopeuh," which means "she who crush the stone serpent." His answer recalls Gen. 3:15 and the depictions of Mary as the Immaculate Conception, her heel on the serpent's head. The devil exalts himself above God and above God's law (see Isaiah 14:12-15), whereas Mary submits to God (see Luke 1:38). Some promote abortion as a "choice." Self-will is exalted. We reject abortion because we, like Mary, submit all our choices to God. That spirit of obedience crushes evil and sin. Our Lady's image reminds us to live in that obedience each day.

The Image and the Pro-life Movement

The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe which converted the Aztecs has been replicated and travels the United States on an explicit mission to end abortion. It is carried into Churches and it is brought in front of abortion clinics nationwide. I have been with the
image many times in these settings. In one instance in Florida, a Catholic girl who was already in the clinic's waiting room looked outside and saw us praying, and decided to cancel her abortion. She came out to talk to us. We arranged for all the assistance she needed, and later that year I had the joy of baptizing her baby, whom she named "Guadalupe."

The image speaks to these girls a message of hope. It also speaks to the pro-life people a message about the task before us. We who fight abortion do not see abortion walking down the street. Instead, we see a girl, frightened and in the grip of despair. We, the Church, are to reach out to her in what is the most critical pastoral mission of our day.

That mission is illustrated by the Annunciation and the Visitation. When Mary is told she will be the Mother of Christ, she does not get wrapped up in herself, thinking about what has just been said and isolating herself from others in order to absorb some unique spiritual experience. Rather, she seems to pay more attention to what Gabriel said about Elisabeth, Mary's cousin, that about Mary! She runs in haste into the hill country and tends to Elisabeth's needs during her pregnancy. The message for us is that authentic religious experience and true worship never turn us in on ourselves. Rather, the more real our encounter is with God, the more attentive and responsive we are to the needs of our brothers and sisters.

Our Lady of Guadalupe has been declared the "Patroness of the Unborn." They will be saved by the message of hope she brings, and by the message of concrete charity with which she challenges the Church. Among the many and varied groups that carry out this pro-life mission, one of special note in this context is "Indians for Life." The outreach department of the National Right to Life Committee, as well as Priests for Life, have fostered and encouraged the growth of this yet small organization, coordinated by Clementine "Little Hawk" Hernandez. Archbishop Charles Chaput, OFM Cap., has been among the strong supporters of this effort, which gives concrete expression to the reverence of Native Americans for the gift of life.

**Conclusion: For the little ones, for us**

When Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego, she addressed him as "Juanito" (signifying the weakest or smallest member of the family), and as "Son", and spoke of herself as both his "Mother" and the "Mother of the One, True living God." All of this indicates another reason why Our Lady of Guadalupe should be entrusted with the unborn.

Today she addresses to us who defend life the same words she addressed to Juan Diego:

"Hear and let it penetrate your hearts, my dear little ones. Let nothing discourage you, nothing depress you; let nothing alter your heart or your countenance. Do not fear vexation, anxiety or pain. Am I not here, your Mother? Are you not in the folds of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else that you need?"

**Our Lady of Guadalupe Prayer:**
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mystical Rose, make intercession for holy Church, protect the sovereign Pontiff, help all those who invoke you in their necessities, and since you are the ever Virgin Mary and Mother of the true God, obtain for us from your most holy Son the grace of keeping our faith, of sweet hope in the midst of the bitterness of life of burning charity, and the precious gift of final perseverance.

Amen.
Praise to You, Lord God!

You have become one of us -- You have become a human being, while still retaining all your power and holiness as God!

You, O Lord, made the journey of the unborn child. By being an embryo, a fetus, and a newborn, you joined all unborn and newborn children to you!

From the beginning of history, O Lord, You were the Creator of every human life. Now, with Christmas, You join Yourself in an unthinkable way with the life You created.

Let this Christmas, O God, fill all of us with awe and wonder at how close human life is to You. Cleanse the world of all that tarnishes and rejects this gift. Purify our hearts of all that fears this gift.

Let our Christmas joy be the joy of welcoming every human life! Amen!
FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS  
December 28

Rite for Miscarriages

Preparation of Church: In the main aisles near the altar, a small rectangular table should be placed covered with a white pall. A bud vase with a single red rose may be placed in the center. Votive candles should surround the rose.

At the beginning of Mass, the Priest:
- invites parent(s) who have lost a child prior to birth to come forward and light a candle in memory of the child;
- encourages the parent(s) to name the lost child; a name is a gift we give our children and helps us to bond with each child, even those lost in death;
- recognizes the lost children as members of our community;
- recognizes the pain felt by the parents, siblings and other community members over the loss of the child.

Opening Prayer: The Priest speaks of the pain of the loss of life and reminds those present of the need to trust in God’s greatness with a prayer, such as:

“Father, we do not understand why You would give life only to take it away so soon. We do not understand why You would let us get so excited about a birth only to be pained by death. Father, we ask You to help us trust in your goodness and wisdom at a time when our wisdom falls short. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.”

Readings: 1st… 1 John 1:5 – 2:2
          2nd… Psalms 124: 2-5, 7-8
          Gospel… Matthew 2:13-18

Petitions:
For all families who have suffered the death of a child during pregnancy, that they may be filled with God’s holy peace and not despair in their pain, we pray to the Lord…

For those families who desire to have the gift of life, that the Lord in His wisdom will respond to their desire, we pray to the Lord…

For our own redemption and a glorious reunion with these sainted children in Heaven, we pray to the Lord…

For all of us, that we may never forget these and all innocent children as members of our community, we pray to the Lord…

For the families of those unborn children lost to abortion, that they may come to know the healing power of the Father’s forgiveness, we pray to the Lord…
For all people whom life is a burden, that God may rekindle their hearts with His love, we pray to the Lord…

**Offertory:** A family should be designated to bring up the gifts to the altar.

Prayer over the Gifts: **Father, we ask you to accept these gifts of bread and wine along with our spirits and the spirits of our innocent children and we ask this through Christ our Lord.**

Preface: **Father, it is right to give You thanks and praise through your son, Jesus Christ. Even though we would have wanted these children to have been born and live full earthly lives, we still give You thanks, Father, for the gift of their short lives here on earth. We are confident that they are alive in your kingdom even now and so we praise You along with the angels and saints as we sing…**

Communion Prayer: **Lord, through this Eucharist may our bond of union with all people living and dead, both old and not yet born, be strengthened and united. May we always remember these innocent children as members of our community of faith. We ask this through Christ our Lord. O Lord, we know that these children from our earthly community now reside with You in the kingdom of glory. We now want to praise You and them as we lift up our prayers to You. Like incense, may our prayers of praise rise up and fill the air with beauty.**

The priest then incenses the table with the rose and candles.

**Final blessing:** The Priest invites everyone to extend their hands in the traditional blessing gesture toward the table as he prays, “**Children, may you share your gifts of life, happiness, and peace with each one of us as we share our pains and struggles of life with you. May the Lord bless you and us. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**”
Prayers For Families

O God, You have created us in love and saved us in mercy, and through the bond of marriage You have established the family and willed that it should become a sign of Christ’s love for His Church.

Shower Your blessings on these families gathered here in Your name. Enable those who are joined by one love to support one another by their fervor of spirit and devotion to prayer. Make them responsive to the needs of others and witness to the faith in all they say and do.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.
Hear our Voice: a prayer for peace
A prayer for peace written by Pope John Paul II, reproduced here as a tribute to his memory, his life and his work for peace and justice.

Hear our voice, for it is the voice of the victims of all wars and violence among individuals and nations.

Hear our voice, for it is the voice of all children who suffer and will suffer when people put their trust in weapons and war.

Hear our voice, when we beg you to instill into the hearts of all human beings the wisdom of peace, the strength of justice and the joy of fellowship.

Hear our voice, for we speak for the multitudes in every country and in every period of history who do not want war and are ready to walk the road of peace.

Hear our voice and grant insight and strength so that we may always respond to hatred with love, to injustice with total dedication to justice, to need with sharing of self, to war with peace.

O God, hear our voice and grant unto the world your everlasting peace.

(Pope John Paul II)
Prayer:
The Church gives thanks for each and every woman; for mothers; for sisters; for wives; for women consecrated to God in virginity; for women dedicated to the many human beings who await the gratuitous love of another person; for the women who watch over the human person in the family, which is the fundamental sign of the human community; for women who work professionally and who at times are burdened by a great social responsibility; for all the women as they have come forth from the heart of God in all the beauty and richness of their femininity and as they have been embraced by His eternal love.

A Mother’s Prayer for Her Children
to Remain Faithful to the Lord:
Heavenly Father, the greatest gift You have given us is Your Son, Whom You have loved for eternity. As a mother, I want my children to be able to know and love Your Son and to follow His teachings, so that they will be able to love with You, Your Son, and the Holy Spirit forever in Heaven.

Please give my children the graces to respond to the gifts of faith, hope, and charity received in Baptism, so they will be able to know Your Son, have confidence in Him and His promises, and love Him and their neighbor. Give my offspring the graces to be faithful to the Catholic Church, which Your Son founded in order to transmit His teachings without error and to make Himself present through the seven sacraments until the end of time.

Help my children to endure any difficulties they may experience in living out the faith of the Catholic Church and to offer these trials to You through Your Son in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Keep before them Your Son’s teaching, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24)

As I try to live a virtuous life, fill my heart with joy, so that my children will be attracted to Your Son and His teaching. Help me to be a good example of faith, hope, love, so my children will see how to live as a follower of Your Son.

My Father, I love You and I love my children whom You gave me the privilege of bringing into the world. Watch over them, so that they will be able to enjoy Your love for all eternity. I pray this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.
St. Monica, patron of mothers, pray for us.
In November, 2001, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the adaptation of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. Following confirmation by the Holy See in February, 2002, the following became particular law for the dioceses of the United States of America:

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FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

February 2

Blessing of Infants, Babies and Children
Before the end of Mass, the priest invites all children, including very small children, infants and babies escorted by a parent, to come up to the front of the altar for a special blessing in honor of the Feast of the Presentation.

The priest may say his own special blessing or he may use the following blessing found in the U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral called: A Catholic Campaign for Putting Children and Families First:

From the lips of children and babes,
The praise of all creation rises to you,
O God of compassion and mercy.
Give us the mind of Jesus
That we too may bless all children
In our strong yet gentle care for them.
Set before us day after day
The gracious love of the Mother of God
That we may nurture and protect these little ones.
We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Rededication of Children to Jesus, Our Lord:

Leader: Bless them with your presence and surround them with your love that they may enjoy many years, all of them pleasing to you. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Prayer: God of the covenant, you anointed your beloved Son with the power of the Holy Spirit to be light for the nations and release for captives. May those who have been born again of water and Spirit, proclaim with their lips the good news of peace and manifest in their life the victory of justice. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(Parents, you may place your hands on the shoulders of those being blessed.)

May God, in whose presence our ancestors walked, bless you. R. Amen.
May God, who has been your shepherd from birth until now, keep you. R. Amen.
May God, who saves you from all harm, give you peace. R. Amen.
FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION  
March 25

**Blessing of a Mother before Childbirth:** This blessing can be used for an individual mother or for several mothers, in the presence of family and friends or the parish community at Mass after the homily or before the closing prayer.

Lord God,  
Creator of human life,  
your Son, through the working of the Holy Spirit,  
was born of a woman,  
so that He might pay the age-old debt of sin  
and save us by his redemption.

Receive with kindness the prayer of your servant  
as she asks for the birth of a healthy child.  
Grant that she may safely deliver a son or a daughter  
to be numbered among your family,  
to serve you in all things,  
and to gain eternal life.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.  
Adapted from *The Book of Blessings (p.111-115)*

**Prayer to the Virgin Mary: (Can be said after blessing)**

O Mary, Mother of Jesus, and Mother of us all, we turn to you today as the one who said “Yes” to life. “You will conceive and bear a Son,” the angel told you. Despite the surprise and uncertainty about how this could be, you said, “Be it done unto me according to your word.”

Mary, we pray to you today for all mothers who are afraid to be mothers. We pray for those who feel threatened and overwhelmed by their pregnancy. Intercede for them, that God may give them the grace to say “yes” and the courage to go on.

May they have the grace to reject the false solution of abortion. May they say with you, “Be it done unto me according to your word.”

May they experience the help of Christian people, and know the peace that comes from doing God’s will. Amen.
Mother’s Day Blessing

This special blessing of mothers is to be given at the end of Mass. Flowers are to be set in a place of prominence before Mass begins (Carnations may be obtained through a wholesaler and/or donated). A soft instrumental may begin and continue until the blessing is over.

The priest will rise and invite all mothers in the congregation to come forward to receive a flower and a blessing. The mothers may choose their own flower or children can be available to hand a flower to each mother. When all the mothers have received a flower and are standing before the congregation, the priest will ask the congregation to stand and join in the blessing. (A Spanish translation is on the next page.)

Priest:

God of Love,
    listen to this prayer.
God of Holy People,
    of Sarah, Ruth and Rebekah;
    God of holy Elizabeth, mother of John,
    of Holy Mary, Mother of Jesus,
    bend down Your ear to this request
    and bless the mother of our family.
Bless her with the strength of Your spirit,
    she who has taught her children
    how to stand and how to walk.
Bless her with the melody of Your love,
    she who has shared how to speak, how to sing
    and how to pray to You.
Bless her with a place at Your eternal dinner table,
    she who has fed and nurtured
    the life that was formed within her
    while still helpless but embraced in her love.
Bless her today,
    now, in this lifetime, with good things, with health.
Bless her with joy, love, laughter
    and pride in her children
    and surround her with many good friends.
May she who carried life in her womb
    be carried one day to Your divine embrace:
    there, for all eternity, to rejoice with her family and friends.
This blessing and all graces, we pray,
    descend upon the mothers of our families:
    in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen+
(prayer taken from Prayers for the Domestic Church by Edward Hays.)
Dios de Amor escucha nuestra oración.
Dios de todos los santos, de Sara, de Ruth y Rebeca;
Dios de Santa Isabel, madre de Juan,
de Santa María, Madre de Jesús,
esuchca nuestra petición
y bendice a las madres de nuestra familia..
Bendícela, a cada una, con la fortaleza de Tu espíritu,
ella que le ha enseñado a nuestros niños como pararse y caminar.
Bendícela con la melodía de Tu amor,
ella que nos ha enseñado como hablar, como cantar
y como orar contigo.
Bendícela con un lugar en la mesa de la eternidad,
ella que ha alimentado y criado la vida que se formaba en ella
mientras aún indefensa pero abrazada a su amor..
Bendícela hoy, ahora,
en este vida, con cosas buenas, con salud.
Bendícela con alegría, amor, con la sonrisa y el orgullo de sus hijos
Y rodéala de muchos buenos amigos.
Que ella, quien llevó la vida en su vientre,
sea cargada un día en Tus divinos brazos:
y allí, por toda la eternidad, se regocije con su familia y amigos.
Por esta bendición y por todos los favores, oremos,
Que desciendan a nuestra madre de familia:
En el nombre del Padre, del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo. Amen.

(Plegaria tomada de las oraciones para la Iglesia Doméstica de Edward Hays)
Prayer:

Dear Isidore, you know how normal it is to cultivate the land for you were employed as a farm laborer most of your life. Although you received God's help materially through Angels in the field, all farmers are aided spiritually to see the wonders God has strewn on this earth. Encourage all farmers in their labours and help them to feed many people. Amen.
FATHER'S DAY

Father’s Day Blessing

This special blessing of fathers is to be given at the end of Mass. (A special gift to be given to the fathers such as St. Joseph holy cards can be set in a place of prominence before Mass begins.) A soft instrumental may begin and continue until the blessing is over.

The Priest will rise and invite all fathers in the congregation to come forward to receive a card and a blessing. When the fathers have come forward before the congregation, the celebrant will ask the congregation to stand and pray for God's blessings upon the fathers. (A Spanish translation is on the next page.)

Priest:  Blessed are You, Lord and Father of All Life,  
who has given to us the gift of the father of our family.  
Today, we honor him,  
and we thank You for the numerous good things  
that are ours because of him.  
His love for us  
has been a sign of Your divine affection  
and a sharing in Your holy love.  
His continuous concern for our needs and welfare  
is a mirror of Your holy providence.  
And so, as we honor him,  
we praise You, Father of All Peoples.  
Bless him this day  
with Your strength and holy power  
that he may continue to be a sign of You, our God,  
and a priestly parent to our family.  
May we who have the honor of bearing his family name  
do so with great pride,  
May we, the members of the family,  
assist him in his holy duties as a parent  
with our respect, and our deep affection.  
Bless him, Lord,  
with happiness and good health,  
with peace and with good fortune,  
so that they who have shared of their very life  
may live forever with You,  
his God and heavenly Father.  
This blessing and all graces, we pray;  
descend upon the father of our family:  
in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  Amen+
(prayer copied from Prayers for the Domestic Church by Edward Hays)
Bendito seas, Señor y Padre de todo cuanto vive
Quien nos has dado como regalo a nuestro propio Padre.

Hoy, cuando nosotros queremos rendirles
un sincero homenaje a todos ellos,
te damos gracias, porque de ellos hemos
recibido innumerables cosas buenas.
El amor que de ellos recibimos
es un signo claro de Tu amor divino
para con todos nosotros.
Pues al igual que Tu nos amas infinitamente
ellos también nos aman y nos protegen.
Sus continuas preocupaciones
y su amorosa protección
son el espejo clara de Tu providencia Divino.

Por tanto, así como hoy nosotros les rendimos
un sentido homenaje
te pedimos, Padre de todos
que los bendigas abundantemente
con tu fortaleza y tu poder divino
para que ellos continuen siendo
signos claros de Tu amor ante el mundo entero.

Que nostros los miembros de sus familias
podamos asistirles en sus santos deberes de Padres
con respeto y con un profundo afecto.
Bendicelos Señor con felicidad y salud,
con paz y con un futuro lleno de prosperidad
Para que ellos que han compartido sus vidas con nosotros,
Un día pueden compartir contigo las dichas celestiales.

Todas estas gracias y bendiciones
los pedimos en tu nombre.
Desciende sobre cado uno de ellos
en el nombre de El Padre
y de el Hijo
Y de el Espíritu Santo. Amen.
6. Parish Pro-Life Activities

1. Roe v. Wade Anniversary
   a. January 22 – A Day of Penance and Prayer
   b. White Ribbons for Life Campaign
   c. Cemetery of the Innocents

2. The Living Rosary with Pro-Life Mysteries of the Holy Rosary

3. A Holy Hour for Life & Prayers before the Blessed Sacrament

4. Litany for Life

5. Garden of the Holy Innocents (Spring)

6. Remembering those in Prison and On Death Row with Black Ribbons (Good Friday)

7. Parish Baby Shower

8. Prayerful and Spiritual Efforts throughout the year

9. The Catholic Church is Pro-Life – 30 ways to be involved
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**ROE V. WADE ANNIVERSARY**

*White Ribbons For Life Campaign*

**PURPOSE:** The White Ribbon for Life Campaign is for the purpose of promoting respect for human life and to oppose abortion on demand. As with yellow ribbons for hostages or pink ones for breast cancer, the idea is to display large loops of WHITE ribbon anywhere and everywhere. They can be displayed or tied on trees, bushes, cars, doorknobs, mailboxes, etc. during the month of January. Small white ribbon loops can be worn on our persons (lapels, sweaters, dresses, etc.)

The white ribbons can be displayed or worn throughout the month of January and especially around the time closest to the January 22nd anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. In this way we can draw attention and raise awareness to the sacredness of human life at all stages of existence, especially the most helpless and innocent - the unborn.

**TO ORGANIZE THIS CAMPAIGN:**

1. Seek the permission of your pastor.
2. Under the direction of your pastor, select a particular weekend in January to promote the White Ribbon for Life Campaign.
3. Small white ribbon loops can be made using white ribbon and small safety pins. Seek the help of the parish respect life committee, other volunteers and youth to help make the small ribbons. Plan a time convenient for most to get together and do this. You will need white ribbon, scissors and small safety pins. Make a few sample ones ahead of time so that those helping will know how long to cut the ribbon and where to place the pin. This will help insure quality control.
4. Obtain volunteers and small children to help hand out the ribbons at the end of all the weekend Masses. Make sure your volunteers are wearing a white ribbon on themselves. The ribbons can be placed in baskets for the volunteers to hold while handing out the ribbons.
5. An announcement can be placed in the bulletin in advance along with an announcement from the pulpit that particular weekend.

**White Ribbon for Life Campaign**

This weekend our parish will be participating in the white Ribbon for Life Campaign. The purpose of this campaign is to promote respect for human life and to oppose abortion on demand. Please pick up a white ribbon at the end of Mass and wear it throughout the month of January. You may also display large white ribbons on your car, trees, house, mailbox, etc…

**PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT** - This weekend our parish is having a White Ribbon for Life Campaign to promote respect for human life and to oppose abortion on demand. Please pick up a white ribbon at the end of Mass and wear it to raise awareness for the cause of life.
The Cemetery of the Innocents is a powerful vehicle for drawing attention to the tragedy of abortion in America. The rows of white crosses present a silent, nonverbal image that has a profound impact on all who pass by. The cemetery saddens and draws to prayer those who respect life. It touches the hearts of the undecided and confronts those who favor abortion. It compassionately draws to repentance those who have had abortions.

This project has brought out many interesting responses from motorists. Many slow down for a close-up view and some even stop. Individuals have taken pictures, placed flowers by the crosses, and even called in to church offices with a variety of comments, the majority being positive.

The ideal times to schedule this activity are in the month of January or October. This is also a great activity for youth who require service hours.

Directions

1. Plan a time when a Cemetery of the Innocents would be effective in your community.
2. Talk to your pastor/parish life coordinator, share your ideas with them and gain their approval.
3. Select a site on your church property that is most visible to those who pass by. It will need to be large enough to accommodate at least 100 crosses arranged in rows approximately 36 inches apart. The 100 crosses serve as a memorial to the 100 + babies killed each day by abortion in the state of Illinois.
4. Seek volunteers to help you make crosses and possibly a local company that will sell the materials to you at cost. Each cross should be 36 inches high and 18 inches wide with the juncture 8 inches down from the top of the vertical piece. The assembled crosses should be painted white.
5. Create a sign for the Cemetery of the Innocents that says “In Memory of the 100 + Babies that Die Each Day in Illinois due to Abortion.” The number of crosses to put out may be obtained through the Diocesan Office for Social Concerns. In addition, some may wish to add a sign saying “Please maintain an attitude of quiet reverence within the memorial cemetery grounds. We are here to pray – not to protest.”
6. Schedule a time to erect the Cemetery of the Innocents and recruit a number of volunteers to help with the work; youth, families and children can help.
7. Recommended display time is anywhere from one to two weeks.
The Living Rosary

The Living Rosary requires a person for each bead of the five decade rosary and a space large enough to hold those participating. It involves a large number of people participating in a prayerful way. The joyful mysteries with use of the Scriptural Rosary are highly recommended. A Marian refrain or stanza is recommended to be sung between each decade and in ending the rosary. "My Soul Rejoices" or "Immaculate Mary" is a suggestion.

Instructions:

Submit an announcement in the Sunday bulletin 3 weeks before the date of the Living Rosary to announce the activity and to recruit volunteers. Continue this announcement until the week of the rosary.

"A Living Rosary will be prayed on _________ at ________ p.m. in the Church proper of __________ Church for greater respect for all human life, especially for the unborn and their mothers. Volunteers are needed to participate as beads of the rosary. Adults and children alike are invited to partake. If you would like to be involved in this beautiful and prayerful activity as a bead of the rosary, please call __________ at __________. All are invited to attend. Refreshments will be served afterward in the parish hall.

- Schedule a cantor and an organist for the singing and music.
- Ask different parish organizations to have members take one of the decades to help in the recruitment.
- Ask one of the parish organizations to serve punch and cookies afterwards.
- Draw a diagram of the church interior and decide where each bead will stand.
- Ask your parish priest/parish life coordinator to be a part of the living rosary.

One Week before the Rosary

- Call each bead participant and communicate to them which bead they will be and their scripture reflection. Tell them to arrive no less than 20 minutes before starting time for last minute instructions.
- Mark each bead spot with a small piece of masking tape.
- Instruct the cantor and organist as to their singing and musical parts.
- Type and copy for each participant the scripture reflections for each bead, the rosary prayers and the songs to be sung.

Suggested Resource: Pro-Life Meditations on the Mysteries of the Rosary by Fr. Frank Pavone are included in this manual on the next page.
Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation:
Mary is troubled by the angel’s greeting, yet rejoices to do God’s will. Let us pray that those who are troubled by their pregnancy may have the grace to trust in God’s will.

The Visitation:
John the Baptist leapt for joy in his mother’s womb. We pray that people may realize that abortion is not about children who “might” come into the world, but is about children who are already in the world, living and growing in the womb, and are scheduled to be killed.

The Nativity:
God Himself was born as a child. The greatness of a person does not depend on size, for the newborn King is very small. Let us pray for an end to prejudice against the tiny babies threatened by abortion.

The Presentation:
The Child is presented in the Temple because the Child belongs to God. Children are not the property of their parents, nor of the government. They – and we – belong to God Himself.

The Finding of Jesus in the Temple:
The boy Jesus was filled with wisdom, because He is God. Let us pray that all people may see the wisdom of His teachings about the dignity of life, and may understand that this teaching is not an opinion but the truth.

Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony in the Garden:
Let us pray for mothers and fathers who are in agony because they are tempted to abort a child. May they be given the good news that there are alternatives, and may they make use of the help that is available.

The Scourging:
As Christ’s flesh was torn by the instruments of those who scourged Him, so the bodies of babies in the womb are torn by the instruments of the abortionists. Let us pray that abortionists may repent of these acts of child-killing.
**The Crowning With Thorns:**
Jesus suffered the pain of thorns in His head, and did so silently. We pray for the mothers and fathers of aborted children. So many of them suffer deep grief and regret over a choice they can never reverse. So many suffer in silence, because others tell them it’s no big deal.

**The Carrying of the Cross:**
Jesus was not condemned by the power of wicked people. He was condemned because of the silence of good people. Silence always helps the oppressor, never the victim. Let us pray that we may never be silent about abortion, but rather will clearly speak up to save babies from death.

**The Crucifixion:**
As we ponder the death of Christ, let us remember the many women who have died from so-called “safe, legal” abortions. Let us ask forgiveness and mercy for them. May their memory save other women from make this tragic mistake.

**Luminous Mysteries**

**Christ is Baptized in the Jordan:**
When Jesus is baptized, the Father’s voice is heard: “This is my beloved Son.” All are called to become adopted sons and daughters of God through baptism. We pray that children in the womb may be protected, so that they may be born and welcomed into the Christian community by baptism.

**Christ is made known at the Wedding of Cana:**
Jesus revealed His glory by the miracle at Cana. The new couple was blessed not only with wine, but with faith in Christ. Let us pray for strong marriages, rooted in the Lord, and open to the gift of new life.

**Christ proclaims the Kingdom and Calls All to Conversion:**
“Repent and believe in the Good News.” Let us pray that these first words of Jesus’ public ministry may be heard by all who have committed abortion. May they know that the Lord calls them to conversion, and may they experience life-giving repentance.

**The Transfiguration:**
Christ is transformed on the mountain, and the disciples see His glory. May the eyes of all people be transformed, that they may see each and every human life as a reflection of the glory of God Himself.

**Jesus gives us the Eucharist:**
“This is My Body, given up for you.” The Eucharist teaches us how to live and how to love. Let us pray that parents who sacrifice the babies for the sake of themselves may learn instead to put themselves aside for the sake of their babies.
Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection:
Christ is Risen! By his Resurrection, He has destroyed the power of death, and therefore the power of abortion. The outcome of the battle for life has already been decided: Life is victorious! Let us pray that all people will spread this victory to every segment of our society.

The Ascension:
By ascending to the Father’s throne, Christ takes our human nature, given to us in the womb, to the heights of heaven. He shows us that human beings are made to be raised to heaven, not thrown in the garbage. Let us pray that the world may learn this truth and reject abortion.

The Descent of the Holy Spirit:
The Holy Spirit is the Advocate: He pleads our cause, for we cannot save ourselves. We pray that He will make us advocates for the babies, who cannot speak or write or vote or protest or even pray.

The Assumption:
The Blessed Virgin Mary was taken body and soul into heaven because she is the Mother of God. Mother and child are united. The Assumption reminds us that they belong together. We pray that society will see that it cannot love women while killing their children, and cannot save children without helping their mothers. We pray that people will be touched by the pro-life question, “Why can’t we love them both?”

The Coronation:
Mary is the Queen of the Universe. The Church teaches that she is the greatest creature, second only to God Himself. The Church defends the dignity of women. We pray that people will understand that to be pro-life means to be pro-woman, and that to be pro-woman demands that we be pro-life.
Holy Hour for Life

All our efforts on behalf of the unborn child are in vain if they are not done in prayer. The most efficacious prayer is that made in the presence of the Lord of Life in the Holy Eucharist. This Holy Hour for Life can be conducted weekly or monthly.

Instructions: Church Bulletin Announcement

This ________ night, DATE, our parish will come together from TIME for an hour of prayer before Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament to help atone for the millions who are killed each year by abortion in our country, for the elderly and terminally ill and disabled who are exposed to the threat of euthanasia, and our disabled newborns who are denied treatment because of their afflictions. We hope that you will attend this Holy Hour for Life to show our Lord your commitment to the precious gift of life He has given to each of us.

Pulpit Announcement:

Please use the above announcement or a brief version of it. A pulpit announcement, by the priest or whomever normally reads the announcements, is important.

Preparing the Church for the Holy Hour:

The church sanctuary should be readied for Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

- Special altar candles and monstrance for Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament
- Fresh flowers on the altar
- Humeral veil for Benediction
- Items necessary for incensation

A table in the middle aisle should contain a program sheet or booklet in sufficient quantity for people to use during the Holy Hour. 100 copies will last several months. You will find it is quieter if you have the program sheet printed on heavy cardboard stock.

A chair and kneeler should be placed toward the front of the center aisle for the priest’s use during the Holy Hour itself.

The church should be opened a half hour before the Holy Hour for those who like to arrive early for private prayer.

The use of music in the Holy Hour (hymns with life themes, etc…) depends upon the custom and availability of music in each parish. However, since the Holy Hour ends with
Benediction, every attempt should be made to provide an organist to accompany the traditional Benediction hymns.

**The Holy Hour:**

The priest, or a deacon, should lead the prayers. Either the priest or a layperson may lead the rosary.

The period of Silent Adoration usually would last about 10 minutes.

If altar servers are used for Benediction, they should be seated in the first pew, one on either side of the center aisle for the Holy Hour. At the conclusion of the period of Adoration, they should leave their pews, make the proper genuflection and quietly go into the sacristy to light the charcoal for Benediction. They should be ready to come out carrying the censer and Benediction cope for the priest as soon as the Consecration prayer concludes.
**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.*

**Litany of the Sacred Heart**

**Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison**

**Christe Eleison, Christe Eleison**

**Kyrie Leeison, 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, in 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 mother’s 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.

Litany for Life
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy. Christ, 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.
For 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 our young people, 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 all those who are in pain, 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 peace, 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
LITANY FOR LIFE

by John Sondag

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy. Lord have mercy.
God, the Father of all Creation, have mercy on us.
Jesus, Redeemer of all mankind, have mercy on us.
Holy Spirit, source of Wisdom, have mercy on us.
Holy Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us.
St. Michael, protector from the devil, pray for us.
St. John the Baptist, who in his mother's womb rejoiced at the presence of Jesus, pray for us.
St. Peter, rock upon whom the Church is built, pray for us.
St. Paul, Apostle of Truth to the Gentiles, pray for us.
St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus, pray for us.
St. Joachim, grandfather of Jesus, pray for us.
St. Anne, grandmother of Jesus, pray for us.
St. Elizabeth, cousin of Mary, pray for us.
St. Stephen, the first martyr, pray for us.
Holy Innocents, the children killed by King Herod, pray for us.
St. Thomas More, government official of great courage, pray for us.
St. Luke, patron of physicians, pray for us.
St. Agatha, patron of nurses, pray for us.
St. Nicholas, patron of children, pray for us.
St. Pius X, lover of children, pray for us.
St. Anthony of Padua, patron of the poor, pray for us.
St. Aloysius Gonzaga, patron of youth and model of chastity, pray for us.
St. Agnes, patron of purity, pray for us.
St. Dominic Savio, youthful saint of God, pray for us.
St. Maria Goretti, child of purity, pray for us.
St. Vincent de Paul, priest of the poor, pray for us.
St. Margaret, patron of expectant mothers, pray for us.
St. Gerald Majella, patron of mothers’ in difficult births, pray for us.
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, a mother and founder of the U.S. Catholic School system, pray for us.
St. Helen, lover of the Cross of Christ, pray for us.
St. Monica, model for mothers persevering in prayer, pray for us.
All holy apostles upon whom the Church is built, pray for us.
All holy martyrs, witnesses to the Truth, pray for us.

Lamb of God, Who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, Who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, Who take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Our Father . .
Placing rose bushes in memory of babies lost before or after birth is a wonderful way of recognizing the significance of a child's life. This can be a healing and emotional ceremony for all involved.

During late winter prepare an area on the church grounds for rose bushes under the guidance of your pastor. Announce to the parish your plans. An example follows:

**Garden of the Holy Innocents**

*A "Rose Garden" dedicated to the holy innocents is being landscaped on the church property. If you have lost a child either before or after birth, then you may wish to buy a rose bush of your choice to be planted in memory of your child.*

*The bushes will be planted on Sunday, April 7th at 4:00p.m. The planting will be preceded by a blessing, dedication, and short prayer by Father ------. Refreshments will be served.*

*For more information or if you wish to participate, please call ----------- at ------------. A rose bush count is needed.*

*You do not need to have lost a child to join us.*

Keep a list of those who are going to participate along with the name of the baby, the baby's date of birth and death. If the parents have not given their baby a name, request that they do so. Ask no other questions than these. You will probably find that most people will be very eager to tell you their story. Appoint someone to be in charge of the refreshments and have shovels available for the planting. Digging the holes in advance and having someone available to help with planting is a good idea. Plan a ceremony with your pastor. Handouts of the ceremony for those present can make this a special memory. The following page contains a ceremony that can be used for blessing rose bushes at the Garden of the Holy Innocents:
Welcome: (soft instrumental to the tune of "Lord of All Hopefulness")
The Priest welcomes everyone present. The Priest asks that the rose bushes be set by the pre-dug holes.

Introduction: The Priest asks everyone to introduce themselves.

Opening Prayer: The Priest says the following opening prayer.

“Father, we do not understand why you would give life only to take it away so soon. We do not understand why you would let us get so excited about a birth only to be pained by death. Father, we ask you to help us to trust in your goodness and wisdom at a time when our wisdom falls short. We ask this through Christ our Lord.”

Psalm 23: The Lord, Shepherd and Host

Scripture Reading: Matthew 19:13-15

Little children were brought to Him then that He might lay hands on them and pray; but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said to them, “Let the little children be, and do not hinder them from coming to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” And when He had laid His hands on them, He departed from that place.

Comments by Priest and those assembled.

Prayers of Petition: The Priest invites those assembled to state prayers of petition.

Blessing of the rose bushes: The Priest blesses the rose bushes by sprinkling them with holy water and saying:

“Praise to you, Lord our God, for you bring forth life from the earth. We ask you to bless these rose bushes that hold the promise of life. Send sunshine and rain to nurture their growth. Watch over them as they bloom and grow. May we share in their beauty and fragrance with all our brothers and sisters. May their buds, so delicate and fragile, be a reminder to us of the life that left us before it flowered. We ask this in the name of Christ the risen Lord. Amen.”

Song: "Lord of All Hopefulness"
Litany for Life: The cantor will lead those assembled in the Litany for Life. (see section 4)

Closing Prayer: Priest will lead those assembled in the following prayer.

“Come to our aid, Lord of Mercy, for we lack the strength and trust of the holy parent, Abraham, who was willing, in obedience to Your command, to sacrifice to You his beloved son Isaac. Lord God, You who are also a parent surely know our pain at the loss of a beloved child. Do not take our tears and sorrow as a sign of our unbelief that all who have died are resurrected to eternal life in You, but, rather, see in these moments a sign of our great love for our child. Help us, Lord, for we do not seek to understand the why of this mystery of death as much as we desire to accept it in a holy way and to be healed and once again whole.”

Blessing: Priest blesses the group.

Priest invites everyone to plant their rose bush and stay for refreshments.
GOOD FRIDAY

_**Remembering Those in Prison and On Death Row**_

_With Black Ribbons_

**PURPOSE:**

To solemnly draw attention to those who are in prison and on death row during Holy Week and encourage prayer on their behalf.

**TO ORGANIZE:**

1. Make black ribbons (see White Ribbon Campaign) with small safety pins.

2. Have volunteers hand them out to those who visit the Church on Good Friday for prayer time, for the Stations of the Cross and the Veneration of the Cross. The volunteer can inform the ribbon recipient that the ribbon is a reminder to all to remember those in prison and on death row in our prayers today. A basket filled with the black ribbons may also be placed at the church entry with a sign that reads:

   _Please take a black ribbon and wear it as a reminder to pray for those who are in prison and on death row. May God have mercy on the souls of prisoners and may our laws be truly just and fair in protecting society, in administering punishment and in aiding rehabilitation._
**Parish Baby Shower**

**PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY**
To collect baby clothes, layette items, good baby furniture and equipment, baby formula, and disposable diapers to distribute to crisis pregnancy centers, Elizabeth Ann Seton Programs or any organization that helps needy or unwed mothers in your community.

**DIRECTIONS**

**2 weeks before the Baby Shower**

Create fliers and display them around the church about the upcoming event.

Place an announcement in the bulletin about the Baby Shower to run for the following two weekends, as follows:

Parish Baby Shower
As the three Magi celebrated the birth of the Christ child by showering him with generous gifts, you are asked to be a modern day Magi and bring a gift for a baby to the Church on ______. These gifts will be used to help needy babies through (name of organization). All items may be placed ______. Please do not wrap your gift. Used items are acceptable, but must be safe, clean and functional. Gift ideas are listed below:

- Baby Clothes (0 to 12 months)
- Layette Items
- Good Baby Furniture
- Baby Equipment
- Baby Formula
- Disposable Diapers

**The week of the Baby Shower**

Have the priest remind people to place their items in _______ and thank those who so generously gave to those who are less fortunate.

Pick up the items after the Masses and distribute them to the recipients.

**The week after the Baby Shower**

Write a thank you note in the bulletin thanking those who gave to the Baby Shower.
Prayerful and Spiritual Efforts throughout the Year

A regular monthly Mass celebrated on the same day and time each month for greater respect for all human life.

A regular monthly Rosary prayed on the same day and time each month for greater respect for all human life.

Use of the Word of Life Series for Bulletin notices and the General Intercessions from the USCCB Pro-Life Department. (go to www.usccb.org/prolife/ to find series)

A Daily Hail Mary for the unborn and their mothers.

Prayer Vigils at the Abortion Clinic or Planned Parenthood Clinic:

When people are present and praying or counseling outside of these places, women are less likely to enter them. Several parishes go to the abortion clinic in Granite City on a monthly basis and many people go to Planned Parenthood clinics on occasion. If your parish would like to become involved in these prayer vigils or would like more information, contact the Diocesan Office for Social Concerns and they will help you with the process. (217-698-8500, x 161 or jkaufmann@dio.org)

Fasting and almsgiving for Life: Helping the local crisis pregnancy center or providing resources and funding for boarding houses for unwed mothers.

A red rose placed by the tabernacle or by a statue of Mary on weekends as a reminder to all to have greater respect for human life (Be sure to place this in the bulletin in order to draw attention – remember to get permission from the pastor/parish life coordinator).

If the tabernacle candle at your parish burns in memory of loved ones, request that it burn in memory of those babies lost to abortion.

At communion time the blessing of children may take place by inviting children who have not received their first Holy Communion to cross their arms over their chest and come up for a blessing. Or, at the end of Mass, Father may invite the children to the altar to receive a blessing.
The Catholic Church is Pro-Life
30 + Years of Roe v Wade
30 Great Ways to be Involved

1. **Prayer:** We cannot expect to accomplish anything without the “power of prayer”. Pray for the pro-life ministry of the Catholic Church and become involved wherever you feel called.

2. **Baby-Sit for single parents:** Many single parents have a hard time finding time to do basic tasks that married couples share. Maybe you, your family, and/or your parish can help single parents by volunteering your time to baby-sit for them.

3. **Get politically active:** Through legislative networks, you can help to transform laws and policies that undermine human life and dignity. You may want to help start a legislative network in your parish to which all can contribute without spending a lot of time and money in the process.

4. **March/Pray/Protest Abortion Clinics:** Participate in Marches for life, praying for life and protesting outside of abortion clinics. Your presence can have a huge impact on changing peoples’ hearts and minds about abortion and other crimes against life.

5. **Collect / Donate pro-life books and materials for your church:** These sources can be invaluable to parishes and can encourage parishioners to become more active in the fight for life.

6. **Speak out for Chastity and Sexual responsibility:** Have educational opportunities within your parish or parish schools to learn about the churches teaching. This can have a big impact on families and children as they struggle with what the culture says are the “right things to do”.

7. **Hold a garage sale:** This is a great way for people to get rid of things they don’t want and make money for your pro-life committee or to donate to organizations that value and support “all life”.

8. **Offer your professional services:** Many not-for-profit organizations within the community cannot make enough money for repairs and up-keep of buildings and machinery that are needed in order for those organizations to function. Connect with carpenters, heating and air technicians, electricians, roofers, painters and other valuable members of your church community that might be willing to provide free labor at appropriate times. Doctors, lawyers, dentists, and other professionals might be able to volunteer their time to help individuals or families with needed services.

9. **Be a special friend/advocate for a single mother or father:** Maybe your parish can become involved in ministry that reaches out to single mothers or fathers who are struggling to connect with others or who just need a “helping hand” or heart to open up to.

10. **Volunteering at your local Crisis Pregnancy Center:** These centers are always in need of volunteers within this ministry. Call your local or nearest Crisis Pregnancy Center to see how you, your family and your parish can be involved in this very important ministry.
11. **Be a foster parent:** Many adoption agencies need good and solid parents to serve as foster parents and positive role models for children in crisis. Maybe you or your spouse feel called to this ministry.

12. **Serve on Pro-Life boards or ministries:** Maybe your parish doesn’t have a pro-life committee in the parish. Speak to your priest about the possibility of starting one. Maybe your community has a Right to Life chapter in which you can serve. Always encourage your parish to have some kind of ministry that serves the needs of those who are most defenseless.

13. **Become involved with handicapped people:** Volunteer for organizations that serve the handicapped. Maybe your parish can look to ways it can reach out to those who are isolated due to being handicapped.

14. **Make treats:** Make treats to sell in bake sales or other fundraisers that your parish may have to assist people in need.

15. **Become a pro-life committee for your parish:** Every parish should have a person who is in charge of the pro-life committee. Try to work as closely as you can with the diocese to understand what the church teaches about respect for life from conception to natural death.

16. **Invite speakers in pro-life ministry to speak at parishes or schools:** There are many ways that your parish can encourage and support the pro-life cause within your community. Having a speaker help motivate and encourage others is always a good start.

17. **Help young women in a maternity home feel welcome:** Some women who are in maternity homes come from very bad situations at home and don’t have a lot of moral or spiritual support. Maternity homes are good places for individuals, families and churches to offer their support.

18. **Give financially:** Most not-for-profit organizations struggle financially. Support those organizations that hold the same values that you do.

19. **Subscribe to publications that keep your family informed on issues:** Keeping Godly material around the house keeps you and your family informed about the issues of life and death.

20. **Labor coach for a single pregnant woman:** This is a great way to reach out to someone who doesn’t have the same family support that you may have but still needs all the moral and spiritual support to bring new life into the world.

21. **Mend / Make clothing for a pro-life ministry:** A lot of people still have the talent to mend and make clothing. Look for ways to get them involved.

22. **Host a baby shower:** If you know of someone in your parish or community who is in need of clothes and other baby items host a baby shower. This can be a fun way for people to get together and offer support for someone who is struggling.

23. **Have a prayer vigil at an abortion Clinic:** Pray outside of an abortion clinic and allow the spirit of the Lord to change the hearts and minds of parents wanting to abort a child.

24. **Investigate what your schools are teaching about sexuality and offer them alternatives:** Ask questions about what our children are being taught about sexuality. Ask to review the text(s) used for this topic. Help influence schools to teach chastity as the basis of their sex education curricula.
25. **Sponsor a pro-life writing contest at your local school:** This should be easy if you parish has a school. Speak with the pastor and the principal to see what guidelines would be needed. Suggestion: Have an incentive in place to encourage student participation.

26. **Walk or sponsor someone in a “Walk-a-Thon” for life:** You or your parish may want to sponsor this in the community to help raise awareness to the evils of abortion and to make money for a worthy cause.

27. **Pro-Life Sunday at your parish:** Participate in a pro-life Sunday at your parish or encourage your parish to have a pro-life Sunday at least once a year.

28. **Sponsor a Sexuality Seminar in your church or community:** Coordinate with youth coordinators and their families to show that sexual activity outside of marriage has dire consequences. Venereal diseases, AIDS, and fatherless children are just a few of the harsh side effects. “The fact that pre-born infants are precious and worthy of life represents one side of the pro-life belief; another side is the sacredness of married loved between husband and wife. This is a message that needs to reach our Christian young people” (*52 Simple things you can do to be pro-life*, p.64 – Pierson and Risser).

29. **Organize and participate in a life chain:** Participate in a life chain during October Respect Life Month or on the anniversary of Roe v. Wade (January 22) each year.

30. **Show a pro-life film or video to your parish or youth group:** Look for ways to educate people within the parish about all aspects of being pro-life and the reality that over one million pre-born babies are killed each year by abortion in the United States and that over forty thousand children die each day from starvation worldwide.
7. Pastoral Activities

1. Project Rachel

2. Elizabeth Ann Seton Program

3. Blessing Blankets

4. Appreciation Dinner for the Parish Respect Life Committee

5. Coordinate Pro-Life Instruction with Parish PSR Coordinator

6. Volunteering and Supporting Local Crisis Pregnancy Centers

7. Pledge of Re-Commitment for Life
“Rachel mourns her children; she refuses to be consoled because her children are no more. Thus says the Lord: Cease your cries of mourning. Wipe the tears from your eyes. The sorrow you have shown shall have its reward. There is hope for your future.”

- Jeremiah 31:15-17

What is Project Rachel?
Project Rachel is a ministry to help women and men who suffer emotionally or spiritually because of an abortion. Project Rachel is a means for those hurting to receive the healing grace of God through sacramental reconciliation, counseling and prayer. If you are in this position, Project Rachel offers an opportunity through loving, caring and understanding outreach to move toward reconciliation – with yourself, your unborn child, your family, your Church and God.

Is Project Rachel for you or someone you know?
Project Rachel is available to anyone suffering because of an abortion experience. This includes women who have had an abortion, fathers of the unborn children, grandparents, other family members and friends. Some common feelings which signal a need for counseling include: grief, guilt, sadness, and anger surrounding the abortion. Many women also experience eating or sleeping problems, difficulty concentrating, nightmares, relationship problems, bouts of crying, nagging feelings or self-blame and self-destructive behavior. These feeling may be denied and suppressed only to surface one, five, or even ten years after the abortion.

A Loving Church:
The Catholic Church has always spoken out strongly against abortion, but, likewise, has always maintained a tradition of love, understanding and forgiveness. If you know someone touched by the trauma of abortion, we want them to know that the Church understands and cares about them. We want them to know that we are willing to help them in the healing process.

What can a person expect?
Project Rachel is a private, confidential experience. By simply calling the Project Rachel number, a person will be put in touch with someone trained to understand their problems. A meeting may be arranged that can include preparation for the sacrament of reconciliation through counseling with trained staff from Catholic Charities Offices of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, and/or other trained parish ministers. Talking over their concerns can help them deal with many unresolved feelings and conflicts.
The First Step:
Often, the first step can be the most difficult. If someone is interested, they can call the Project Rachel Hotline for more information. They will not need to make their identity known to anyone and all matters will remain private and confidential.

PROJECT RACHEL
TOLL FREE

1-877-RACHEL-5
(1-877-722-4355)

OR
LOCAL CALLS
217-698-4456

Each parish should have Project Rachel information available to parishioners. Project Rachel brochures and posters are available for promoting this ministry in your parish. If the parish Pro-Life Committee knows anyone who has a special interest in this ministry and would like to get involved, please refer that person to the Office for Social Concerns at 217-698-8500 x 167.

If possible, ask your parish to print the Project Rachel telephone number listed above in your weekly bulletin.

Helpful websites, for post-abortion retreats and awareness, are included in chapter 10 of this manual under Educational Resources and websites.
What is the Elizabeth Ann Seton mission?
The mission of the Elizabeth Ann Seton (EAS) Program is to embrace the sanctity of life by nurturing pregnant and parenting women. EAS collaborates with a multi-faith based network and community organizations to provide education, practical assistance and mentoring support.

What is the Elizabeth Ann Seton Program?
The Elizabeth Ann Seton (EAS) Program, Inc. is a non-profit, 501c3 organization which was incorporated in 1995, in Springfield, Illinois. The EAS central office is housed in St. John’s Hospital. Mentoring and educational programs are currently serving women and children in the Springfield, Jacksonville and Beardstown, Illinois communities. Individual programs are sponsored by churches and community organizations and network with existing social service agencies.

Who is Elizabeth Ann Seton?
The EAS Program is named for Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821), a woman who moved from great wealth to extreme poverty, marriage to a prominent shipping merchant to the isolation of a single mother. Throughout her life, she witnessed to the ideal that women deserve a good education and chance for a fulfilled life. She used her personal resources to establish several schools, orphanages and hospitals. Her entire life was devoted to serving women and children.

What does the Elizabeth Ann Seton Program do?
The Elizabeth Ann Seton Program provides education, practical assistance and one-on-one mentoring support to low income pregnant and parenting women.

Mom to Mom Mentoring Programs:
Many of the volunteers are mothers who want to share their parenting knowledge with new moms by modeling positive parenting skills. The volunteer mentors provide new and expectant mothers with guidance and assistance in meeting the health, education and emotional needs of their children and themselves.

Educational Programs:
Utilizing professional speakers, EAS presents monthly educational sessions on topics such as parenting, communication, health issues, finances, and job-seeking skills. EAS mentors refer participating families to community service programs as needed.

Community Integration:
Through a partnership with Lincoln Land Community College, EAS offers English as a Second Language classes to Hispanic families in Beardstown, Illinois.
Meeting Daily Needs:
EAS is in need of professional services, educational program assistance, volunteer mentors and babysitters. Interested providers and volunteers should be referred to:

Elizabeth Ann Seton Program
319 North Fifth Street
Springfield, Illinois 62701
Phone: (217) 757-6024
Fax: (217) 525-4909

Email: easeton@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.elizabethannseton.com
Blessing Blankets

A Baby Blessing Blanket can be made from soft flannel material and given to expectant mothers or mothers of newborns as a special gift to welcome her child into the world.

For this project you will need:
1. Volunteers - consider asking the Ladies Club, a Senior Club, a sewing group, a school group, etc., to make some of the blankets as a project or to have an annual baby blanket sewing party;
2. Fabric, thread and possibly other sewing ideas - ask for donations of fabric, thread, ruffles or other supplies (children's flannel sheets work wonderfully);
3. Sewing machine;
4. A Blessing Blanket card - These can be handmade with a colored drawing by a child and attached to the blanket. The script of the card reads as follows:

Blessing Blanket
May your baby be wrapped in the love of our heavenly Father, as you wrap your baby lovingly with this blanket. This Blanket was made with love and prayers for your baby by ______________.

5. A pattern - The blankets need to be the size of a receiving blanket. This would be about 2 1/2 feet by 2 1/2 feet with about 3/4 of an inch extra added to the length and width for a seam. Cut a pattern in the shape of a square with an 18 3/4 inch length and 18 3/4 inch width.
6. Instructions - Cut the material in the shape of the pattern. With matching thread turn the edges in two times and sew them down. One may also wish to use seam binding or ruffles around the edges of the blanket. Attach the Blessing Blanket Card.

Optional idea - A kit can be made with pre-cut material and instructions so that individuals can take them home to work on.

Blessing Blankets can be given to expectant mothers, mothers with newborns or anyone most in need of a blanket.
A yearly appreciation dinner or party for those who volunteer for the parish Pro-Life Committee is a great way to boost morale and strengthen bonds among those who are on the parish Pro-Life Committee.

**Consider the following in planning your appreciation event:**

**Who?** Who will be invited? May the entire family come? Don’t forget to consult your pastor’s schedule first so that he can attend.

**What?** What kind of gathering will it be? A dinner, a picnic, a barbeque, a brunch? Will it be structured or casual?

**Where?** Where will the event be held? Can you use parish facilities, the Rectory, or someone’s home?

**When?** Choose a time most convenient for all so that there will be 100% participation.

**Other comments:**
1. Is there someone who deserves recognition?
2. Will there be a small gift for each guest? (little feet pins, a rose)
3. Have a time set to begin and end.
4. Delegate the work.
5. Will there be decorations?
6. Invite volunteers who assist with other activities.
7. Make it very clear that this is not going to include a meeting (you may consider a guest speaker - Diocesan offices have people who will speak at no cost to your committee – 217-698-8500, ext 167).
8. Consult with the pastor/parish life coordinator to see if they are willing to help finance the meal.
Coordinate Pro-Life Instruction with Parish School of Religion (PSR) Coordinator

Purpose of the Program: To institute a Pro-Life curriculum in the existing Parish School of Religion (PSR) education program.

As Pope John Paul II reminded us: “Where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly consistent. It cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an invisible good” (The Gospel of Life, no. 87).

In order to effectuate a cultural change toward the recognition that all human life is sacred and inviolable, our hope lies with the education of our children. Parish School of Religion (PSR) instruction is an opportunity to reach grammar school and high school age students and to equip those students with the truth to understand and participate in the Pro-Life causes.

Early coordination, before PSR instructors set their curricula, with the parish PSR Coordinator or with PSR instructors, is critical. It is advisable to emphasize that a Respect Life program is not sex education and it is not only an annual lecture. Pro-Life Coordinators and Committees should consider use of the Huntsville Respect Life Curriculum, which is a set of lesson plans that can teach PSR students about the sanctity of Life over the course of many lessons between pre-kindergarten through twelfth grades. Copies of the Huntsville Respect Life Curriculum are available through the Diocesan Office For Social Concerns. (217-698-8500, ext. 161)

Other PSR educational ideas include:

1. Asking the PSR Coordinator or PSR instructors to display Pro-Life posters in their classrooms;
2. Maintaining a Respect Life video or compact disk library for the PSR faculty;
3. Providing lists to the PSR Coordinator of available guest speakers on the topics of chastity, contraception, abortion, capital punishment, and end of life issues;
4. Borrowing resource material from the Diocesan Office for Social Concerns.
Volunteering and Supporting Local Crisis Pregnancy Centers

One good way for your parish to be involved is to contact the local crisis pregnancy center in the community or county. These usually are wonderful caring places where women, who are in crisis pregnancies, go for support and information.

**A word of caution:** As a committee, I would research the local crisis pregnancy center before you promote or participate in fundraising activity to see if they uphold the same moral and ethical teachings of the Catholic Church. If you are not satisfied with answers the local coordinator gives you, your committee may want to find other projects to volunteer for or do fundraising for. Your committee may even want to take on the responsibility of offering support and information to women in crisis pregnancy situations if other resources are not available in the community.

**Example of one in Springfield IL:**

**Pregnancy Care Center of Springfield, Inc.**
319 North Fifth Street
Springfield, IL. 62701
217-525-5630

**Pregnancy Care Center of Springfield, Inc:** Our mission is to help pregnant women bring healthy babies into the world and to prepare parents for parenthood through education, advocacy, and collaborative partnerships with private and public organizations. The Center serves pregnant teens, women, and their families who reside in Springfield and the surrounding area. All services provided by the Pregnancy Care Center are free of charge and confidential. Additionally, the Pregnancy Care Center is an application agent for the All Kids Insurance Program.
PLEDGE OF RE-COMMITMENT

I THANK GOD TODAY FOR THE GIFT OF MY LIFE,
AND FOR THE LIVES OF MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS.
I KNOW I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE UNBORN
WHO CANNOT SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.
I KNOW THAT THE MOST SERIOUS TRAGEDY OF OUR DAY
IS THE TRAGEDY OF ABORTION.
TODAY I COMMIT MYSELF
NEVER TO BE SILENT,
NEVER TO BE PASSIVE,
NEVER TO BE FORGETFUL OF THE UNBORN.
I COMMIT MYSELF TO BE ACTIVE IN THE PRO-LIFE MOVEMENT,
AND NEVER TO STOP DEFENDING LIFE
UNTIL ALL MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARE PROTECTED,
AND OUR NATION ONCE AGAIN BECOMES
A NATION WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE
NOT JUST FOR SOME, BUT FOR ALL. AMEN!
8. Education and Awareness

1. Hosting a Pro-Life Speaker

2. Educational Ideas

3. Spiritual Adoption Program

4. Poster and Essay Contest

5. October Respect Life Packet from USCCB Pro-Life Activities Department
Hosting a Pro-Life Speaker

Hosting a speaker at your parish (or with other parishes or deanery-wide) on a Respect Life topic is a great way to educate on Respect Life issues. Proper planning and promotion are essential for having a large number of people attending the presentation.

Preparations:

1. Talk to your pastor about your ideas and plans, and seek his assistance and input. (If the talk is for youth, work with your parish DRE and/or Youth Minister.)
2. Select some possible dates, a time and a location that you and your pastor believe would be most convenient for parishioners. Also, select a topic that you would like to have presented (abortion, death penalty, embryonic stem cell research, post-abortion syndrome etc…). Consider a stipend for the speaker.
3. Contact the Diocesan Office for Social Concerns at 217-698-8500 to make arrangements for a speaker or topic.
4. Plan a strategy for getting the word out about the presentation (e.g., bulletin announcements for several weeks in advance, a bulletin insert, a pulpit announcement, a personal invitation by the pastor to the congregation at the end of Mass, sponsorship by other parish organizations, personal invitations to parishioners).
5. Plan to have refreshments before or after the presentation, and include this as a part of your announcement. This is a good way to involve others.

At the time of the Presentation:

1. Set up a table at the entry for sign in, name tags and handouts.
2. Welcome all those present and, if possible, have your pastor open the presentation with a short prayer and introduction of the speaker and topic.
3. At the end, thank all for attending and close with a short prayer and refreshments.
Educational Ideas

1. **Put a Pro-Life poster in every religious education classroom.** A beautiful one is the child at eighteen weeks gestation poster (showing the child sucking her thumb, with Psalm 139:13-14 on it) for $3.00 each. To order call the Pro-Life Secretariat at (202) 541-3070 and ask for item #8904.

2. **Publish the phone number of the Project Rachel in your church bulletin every Sunday.** Toll free 1-877-722-4355 or 1-877-RACHEL-5 or (217) 698-4456 for Local Calls.

3. **Start a Respect Life Video Library for your R.E. program.** Write a memorandum to the teachers (Junior and High School) telling about the videos, and watch them hop off the shelves and start all kinds of wonderful classroom discussions.

4. **Encourage your Director of Religious Education (DRE) to offer as part of the R.E. program** a class or workshop on chastity. Call the Office of Family and Youth Ministry at 217-698-8500, ext. 121 for more information on chastity resources available to parishes.

5. **Invite the Mother/Daughter and Father/Son Team to present a workshop at your parish on a Sunday to parents and youth in their pre-teen and early teen years (Call Diocesan Office for Family Life for details 217-698-8500, ext. 121).** This is a presentation on the beauty and wonder of growing up and an appreciation of the gift of fertility.

6. **Stock the brochure and pamphlet rack at church with Pro-Life educational materials and information on helping agencies.**

7. **Set up a Respect Life Education Table at the parish Ministry Fair or annual Parish Festival.** The Diocesan Office for Social Concerns can provide you with the materials to set up a table. Reserve these items by contacting them at 217-698-8500 x 167.

8. **Resource materials may be borrowed from the Diocesan Office for Social Concerns for educational purposes** by calling 217-698-8500 x 167.
What is the Spiritual Adoption Program? It is very simple. Participants in the Spiritual Adoption Program pledge to pray daily for nine months for a baby in danger of abortion. While this child may remain unknown to his or her 'spiritual parents', many people have found that naming 'their child' helps to keep them focused on the reality that their prayers are helping to save the baby (and the mother) from the harm of abortion. The full purpose of the program is outlined below.

The purpose of the Spiritual Adoption Program is threefold:

1. Encourage schools and parish communities to pray for babies who are aborted or who may eventually be aborted;

2. Educate students and parishioners about the development of the pre-born child;

3. Provide mothers in need with assistance in the form of donated baby items at the conclusion of the program.

Who can participate?

Parishioners, students, prayer groups and anyone who is concerned about abortion, and who is willing to pray for babies in danger of abortion, for their mothers, fathers and other family members.

Who benefits from the Spiritual Adoption Program?

Everyone! While it is not always possible to see the particular effects of prayer, we know through Scripture and by faith that God wants us to pray, in this case for babies and their families, and we know that He answers all prayers. The educational aspect of the program is beneficial to people of all ages and creeds. Parishes and schools are encouraged to display the very appealing full color posters which both depict and describe in words the baby’s development each month. These posters are an attempt to restore the ‘humanity’ of the unborn child in the minds and hearts of all who see them. To order call the Pro-Life Secretariat at (202) 541-3070 and ask for item #8904. A written description of the child’s development should also be printed in the church bulletin.

Is there any other way in which the Spiritual Adoption Program helps mothers and their babies?

Yes, definitely. At the end of the program a ‘baby shower’ is held and participants
bring new baby items such as disposable diapers, formula, clothes, layette items, and other baby articles. These items are then donated to a local pregnancy center to help mothers in need. So, aside from the spiritual and educational benefits, the Spiritual Adoption Program helps in a very tangible way as well.

How does the program work and how can my group get started?

At the beginning of the program a brief announcement describing the program is made in church or school. Prayer cards can be distributed as people enter or leave the church. For the following 9 months of the program one poster per month is displayed to educate and to touch hearts. A brief description of the baby's development should also be printed in the bulletin. At the end of the program a "baby shower" is held and the students or members of the congregation donate baby items which are then given to a local pregnancy center.

To get more solid information on this particular program, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia Respect Life Office has a booklet in PDF format that can be accessed via the web at: [www.archdiocese-phl.org/respect/prolife/sabooklet.pdf](http://www.archdiocese-phl.org/respect/prolife/sabooklet.pdf)
Poster and Essay Contest

Purpose of the Program: To encourage the elementary and high school age students to think about and promote respect for human life.

Instructions:

5 weeks before contest:
- Ask permission from your pastor to hold the poster and essay contest.
- Establish deadline for submitting the posters and essays to the parish Pro-Life committee. Respect Life Month (October) is a good time to hold the contest.
- Determine what prize(s) you will offer to the winners. Ask your pastor/parish life coordinator to fund the purchase of the prizes from your parish pro-life committee fund. Some possible prizes: savings bonds, subscriptions to a Catholic youth magazine, precious feet pins, or books. Present each winner with a certificate of recognition.
- Determine if you will have only first place winners or first and second place winners. You will also need to decide which grades will be grouped together. At the elementary school level, group no more than two grades together.

One month before contest:
- Send a copy of the Poster and Essay Contest categories you have selected to your elementary school Principal and Director of Religious Education (DRE). Include enough copies for each teacher and include prize information.
- Assemble a panel of parishioners to help you judge the posters and essays.

No later than 2 weeks after receiving posters and essays:
- Meet with panel of judges and select the winning posters and essays.
- Announce winners and hold a special event to bring the winners together. Give the winners their certificate of recognition and prizes at a special liturgy and hold a parish reception after the liturgy. Display posters and essays for the parents and other parishioners at the reception.
- Contact parents and students and make certain they will be at the special liturgy.
The October Respect Life Program is a once a year packet that comes to each pastor/parish life coordinator, as well as each parish Pro-Life Coordinators, and it provides good information and articles about important and timely topics centered on Pro-Life issues. These articles are written by key leaders in the Pro-Life field including bishops, priests, religious and lay leaders.

The yearly program also includes a nice liturgy guide that you will want to review with your pastor/parish life coordinator to see how it can be utilized in the parish so that every parishioner benefits from this helpful resource.

To access and review previous Respect Life Programs, go to www.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rlp/ or call the Office for Social Concerns at 217-698-8500, ext 161 for more information and details.
9. Public Policy

1. A Call to Political Responsibility
2. Legislative Districts of Illinois
3. Congressional Map
4. Tips on Writing
5. Tips on Calling
6. Meeting with Members of Congress
7. Legislative Web Sites

Diocesan Legislative Network

You and your committee are invited to become regular participants in the Diocesan Legislative Network. If you do, you can send names and email addresses to jkaufmann@dio.org to be added to the network. The Diocesan Legislative Network will address a variety of issues and participants are asked to email, call, or write legislators with the Catholic position. Most of the legislation that is activated comes from the Catholic Conference of Illinois (CCI) or the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). If you should have any questions please call the Office for Social Concerns for details at 217-698-8500 x 161.
DO's and DON'Ts

Individual Catholics are called to be active and informed citizens -- running for office, participating in political parties and campaigns, and voting for candidates of their choice. They are part of diocesan legislative networks and a wide variety of community organizations and advocacy groups. The Church as an institution has important but limited roles in the political process, outlined here. As a tax exempt organization, the Church is not permitted to engage in partisan activities, supporting or opposing candidates and parties. These DO's and DON'Ts can help guide an appropriate program of voter education and political responsibility.

DO's

- Address the moral/human dimension of public issues
- Share Church teaching on human life, human rights and on justice and peace
- Apply our values to legislation and public issues
- Conduct a nonpartisan voter registration drive on Church property
- Distribute unbiased candidate questionnaires covering a variety of issues (these would need to be approved by the diocese first)

DON'Ts

- Distribute partisan campaign literature on Church property
- 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
- Distribute a biased candidate survey

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

The church's role in the political order includes the following:
-- education regarding the teachings of the Church and the responsibilities of the faithful;
-- analysis of issues for their social and moral dimensions;
-- measuring public policy against gospel values;
-- participating with other concerned parties in debate over public policy; and
-- speaking out with courage, skill and concern on public issues involving human rights, social justice and the life of the Church in society.
ILLINOIS CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

LEGEND

Congressional Districts (2002)

Prepared by the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University
Revised: 01/16/2002
Tips on Writing Legislators

Writing to Congress: (E-mail, Fax or U.S. Mail)

1. Limit the letter to one page in length (short and to the point).
2. Type or legibly write.
3. Have a respectful and courteous tone; do not insult or threaten.
4. Stick to one issue; include the bill number if possible.
5. State your position up front, including what you are asking the member to do.
6. Support your position with facts; avoid “I believe,” “I feel” statements.
7. Explain how the legislation will affect you and others; avoid overly emotional arguments.
8. Suggest a better approach to the legislation you disagree with.
9. Thank the member for any past support.
10. Request a written response.

U.S. Mail:
The Honorable _____________        The Honorable_____________
U.S. Senate                                         U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510                    Washington, D.C. 20515

Fax and E-mail Letters:
➢ For fax number and e-mail addresses, contact:
➢ Federal Level: http://thomas.loc.gov
➢ State Level: www.ilga.gov/

Writing to the White House:

U.S. Mail:
The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

E-mail Letters: president@whitehouse.gov
Fax Letters: 202-456-2461
Tips on Calling Legislators

Calling Congress:
1. Ask to speak with the aide who handles the issue you are calling about.
   
   ➢ If the aide is unavailable:
   ➢ Give message to receptionist
   ➢ Leave message on aide’s voicemail

2. Introduce yourself as a constituent.
3. Have a respectful and courteous tone.
4. Convey your message in a clear, brief manner. Include bill number, if known.
5. Give complete name and address to the office.
6. Ask for a written response that details the Member’s position.

To call your Representative or Senator:

➢ Capitol Switchboard Phone Number: 202-224-3121
➢ State of Illinois Information on Representatives and Senators: www.ilga.gov
➢ If you don’t know who your Members are, the capitol switchboard operator can assist you.
➢ Or call your Member’s local office.
➢ Information on Member’s phone numbers can be found at: http://thomas.loc.gov on the Federal Level
➢ Information on Member’s phone numbers in Illinois can by found at: www.ilga.gov on the Illinois General Assembly Web Site.

Calling the White House:

➢ White House Comments Line: 202-456-1111
Meeting with Members of Congress

1. Arrange a meeting with your Representative or one of your Senators.
   
   ➢ Schedule a meeting at the Member’s local office.
   ➢ If visiting Washington, DC, consider arranging a meeting at the Member’s Washington office.

2. Include in your lobbying group people who have varied, but relevant, backgrounds: doctors, nurses, pregnancy counselors, lawyers, community leaders.

3. Inform yourself in advance of the Member’s voting record and position on the issue.

4. Prepare for the meeting:
   
   ➢ Assign each group member a specific talking point.

5. When giving facts/figures/survey results/dollar amounts, have legitimate documentation.

6. Provide stories when appropriate.

7. Provide your Member with a packet of information supporting your position: articles, editorials, reports, survey results.

8. Press for commitment:
   
   ➢ Ask if you can count on the Member’s vote or what you can do to get his or her support.

9. Thank Member and/or Aide for their time.

10. Follow up with a thank you letter that restates your position.

11. Report the Member’s comments to the Diocesan Office for Social Concerns by calling 217-698-8500, ext 161 or email osc@dio.org
## Legislative Web Sites

### Illinois State Legislative Information:
www.ilga.gov/

### Federal Legislative Information:
http://thomas.loc.gov

### Diocese of Springfield Web Site:
www.dio.org

### Catholic Conference of Illinois Web Site:
www.catholicconferenceofillinois.org

### United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
www.usccb.org

### National Committee for a Human Life Amendment
www.nchla.org
10. Educational Resources, Web Sites and Post-Abortion Resources

1. Church Documents

2. Web Sites for Education on Life Issues

3. Christian Faith-Based Post-Abortion Resources
Church Documents:


Excellent Web Site for Education on Life Issues:

www.usccb.org – United States Catholic Conference of Bishops Pro-Life Activities Department

www.priestsforlife.org – Priests for Life – Materials on web page are very usable and free.

www.vatican.va/ - News – Vatican Library - Writings (Encyclicals – Pastoral Letters – Apostolic Exhortations – Homilies) etc…….

www.abortionfacts.com – Good information and facts on abortion and other life issues.

www.unfairchoice.info – Post- abortion information

www.womendeservebetter.com – Feminists for Life of America

www.secondlookproject.org – Basic facts regarding abortion

www.ccedp.org – The Catholic Campaign to End the Death Penalty – USCCB

www.nchla.org – National Committee for a Human Life Amendment
### Christian Faith-Based Post-Abortion Resources

- **Priests for Life (Roman Catholic)**  
P.O. Box 141172  
Staten Island, NY 10314  
[www.priestsforlife.org](http://www.priestsforlife.org)

- **National Organization of Episcopalians for Life (NOEL)**  
405 Frederick Avenue  
Sewickley Pennsylvania 15143  
[www.noelforlife.org](http://www.noelforlife.org)

- **Rachel’s Vineyard Retreats (Roman Catholic & Interdenominational retreats)**  
Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries  
743 Roy Road  
King of Prussia, PA 19406  
[www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org)

- **SafeHaven (Non-Affiliated)**  
P.O. Box 336  
Beardstown, IL 62618  
[www.safehavenministries.com](http://www.safehavenministries.com)

- **Silent No More Awareness Campaign (Roman Catholic & Episcopalian)**  
Sponsored by Priests for Life and NOEL  
[www.silentnomoreawareness.org](http://www.silentnomoreawareness.org)

- **Word of Hope (formerly Healing Hearts) (Lutheran)**  
Lutherans for Life ([www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org))  
1120 South G Avenue  
Nevada, Iowa 50201-2774  

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### Other Post-Abortion Resources

- **Elliot Institute**  
P.O. Box 7348  
Springfield, IL 62791-7348  
[www.afterabortion.org](http://www.afterabortion.org)

- **Feminists for Life of America**  
733 15th Street NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005  
[www.feministsforlife.org](http://www.feministsforlife.org)

- **Project Rachel**  
toll free 1-877-RACHEL-5  
1-877-722-4355  
local 217-698-4456  
projectrachel@dio.org
11. Pro-Life Issues

1. Key Facts about Abortion

2. Catechism of the Catholic Church on Euthanasia

3. Catholic Support for Ethically Acceptable Stem Cell Research

4. Catholic Teaching on the Death Penalty

5. Abortion, Contraception, Natural Family Planning

6. What is Natural Family Planning

7. The Evolving Definition of Disability
Key Facts About Abortion
(Elliot Institute – afterabortion.org)

Most Abortion Are Unwanted:
- 52% of women who suffer post-abortion trauma report being “forced by others” into unwanted abortions.
- The National Abortion Federation reports that one in five women served by their clinics are philosophically and morally opposed to abortion. Other research indicates that up to 70% of women seeking abortion are morally opposed to it.
- The Alan Guttmacher Institute, Planned Parenthood’s research affiliate, reports that the primary reasons women abort are a lack of financial resources and emotional support.
- Journal articles by National Abortion Federation officials verify that many women in a crisis pregnancy situation may be making hasty, ill-considered decisions for abortion.
- In a survey of 252 women who experienced post-abortion complications:
  - 66% said their counselor’s advice was very “biased” toward choosing abortion.
  - 40% to 60% said they were uncertain of their decision prior to counseling, of whom 44% were hoping to find an alternative to abortion during their counseling session.
  - Only 5% were encouraged to ask questions, and 52% to 71% felt their questions were sidestepped, trivialized or inadequately answered.
  - Over 90% said they weren’t given enough information to make an informed choice.
  - Over 80% said it was very unlikely they would have aborted if they had not been so strongly encouraged to abort by others, including their abortion counselors.

Most Wouldn’t Have Aborted if Given Support:
- 83% of those suffering post-abortion trauma said they would have carried to term if they had received support from boyfriend, families or other important people in their lives.
- Studies of women who sought but did not have abortions show that few, if any, later regret their decision or suffer psychological problems from have an unintended child.

Abortion May Be Legal, But it’s Not Safe:
- The standard of care is often inadequate to protect women’s health. Some abortionist move from state to state to avoid investigations and patient complaints.
- Peer-reviewed research in major medical journals shows serious potential side effects, such as infertility, depression, and increased risk of death from all causes, including suicide.
- Most abortionists don’t screen for risk factors or determine whether abortion will benefit their patients. Proper screening would eliminate 70% or more of all abortions.
Some abortion providers admit lack of expertise in counseling or failure to cover all the aspects of the abortion decision that might be relevant to women considering abortion.

Many abortion “counselors” are unlicensed and untrained. Some are hired to “sell” abortions and ease women’s concerns so they will be more likely to abort, thus increasing clinic profits.

More than 80% of all abortions are done in non-hospital facilities, at clinics devoted solely to providing abortions and family-planning services. Most abortions are done by a stranger who has no relationship with the patient, either before or after the procedure. Often women do not return for post-surgical care.

Abortion Doesn’t Solve the Problem:

- Women face a considerable risk of falling into a repeat abortion pattern. Approximately 45% of all abortions are not repeat abortions.
- Women who have more than one abortion face an even greater risk of experiencing multiple physical and psychological complications.

Most Women Don’t Want Abortion, Even in the Hard Cases:

- In a survey of 192 women who became pregnant through rape or incest:
  - Many only aborted because they felt pressured to do so, and reported that abortion only increased their grief and trauma.
  - None of those who gave birth said they wished they had not given birth or that they had chosen abortion instead.

The Majority of Americans Believe Abortion is Wrong:

- 77% of the public—including one-third of those who describe themselves as strongly pro-choice—believe abortion is the taking of a human life.
- Another major poll found that 65% of those who favor legalized abortion and 74% of those who have had an abortion believe abortion is morally wrong.
- Attitudes are changing. Americans, especially young people, are becoming increasingly pro-life.
- There has been a slow, steady drop in abortion rates over the last 15 years, in part because more women are warning others that abortion is not a “quick and easy” solution.
- Even among women who identify themselves as strongly pro-choice, less than a fourth believe abortion improves women’s lives.
- 80% of Americans believe negative emotional reactions are common or very common after abortion, and most believe that these reactions are moderately severe to very severe.
- A poll by the pro-abortion Center for the Advancement of Women showed that over half of the American women oppose abortion on demand. The women polled stated that “keeping abortion legal” is their next-to-last most important priority.

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Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "overzealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected.

Intentional euthanasia, whatever its forms or motives, is murder. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator.

Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable.

Thus an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator. The error of judgment into which one can fall in good faith does not change the nature of this murderous act, which must always be forbidden and excluded.

Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity. As such it should be encouraged.

Statement on Euthanasia (1991)
Administrative Committee: NCCB
As Catholic leaders and moral teachers, we believe that life is the most basic gift of a loving God--a gift over which we have stewardship but not absolute dominion. Our tradition, declaring a moral obligation to care for our own life and health and to seek such care from others, recognizes that we are not morally obligated to use all available medical procedures in every set of circumstances. But that tradition clearly and strongly affirms that as a responsible steward of life one must never directly intend to cause one's own death, or the death of an innocent victim, by action or omission. As the Second Vatican Council declared, "euthanasia and willful suicide" are "offenses against life itself" which "poison civilization"; they "debase the perpetrators more than the victims and militate against the honor of the creator" (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, n.27).
Catholic Support for Ethically Acceptable Stem Cell Research (USCCB)

Sometimes it is wrongly said that the Catholic Church opposes stem cell research. In fact, the Church supports ethically responsible stem cell research, while opposing any research that exploits or destroys human embryos. Because the Church opposes deliberately destroying innocent human life at any stage, for research or any other purpose, it opposes embryonic stem cell research as currently conducted. However, when scientists proposed avenues for possibly obtaining embryonic stem cells or their pluripotent equivalent without creating or harming embryos, Catholic leaders were among the first to welcome this idea: www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1435477/posts. The Catholic Church has long supported research using stem cells from adult tissue and umbilical cord blood, which poses no moral problem. Catholic institutions at times have taken the lead in promoting such constructive research, which is already providing cures and treatments for suffering patients:

- In October 2005, the Catholic bishops of South Korea said they will raise and donate about $10 million to advancing adult stem cell research: www.taipeitimes.com/News/world/archives/2005/10/06/2003274635
- South Korea's Catholic Medical Centre announced in June 2005 that it had successfully treated stroke and vascular disease in 64 patients using adult stem cells: www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=3491
- A March 2005 breakthrough demonstrating the capabilities of adult stem cells in Australia was made possible by a grant of $50,000 (Australian dollars) from the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney: http://edition.cnn.com/2005/TECH/science/03/21/australia.stemcell/
- In February 2005 a major Catholic teaching hospital in Boston, Caritas St. Elizabeth's Medical Center, announced that it had “identified adult stem cells that may have the capacity to repair and regenerate all tissue types in the body”: www.caritas-semc.org/home/site_content_list_detail.asp?s=2328&ss=324
- The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops worked to pass federal legislation creating a nationwide public bank for umbilical cord blood stem cells, for research and the treatment of a wide variety of diseases: www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2005/05-159.shtml
- Monsignor Thomas Hartman, director of radio and television for the Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre, founded The Thomas Hartman Foundation for Parkinson’s Research. The foundation has raised millions of dollars for adult stem cell research and other avenues for curing Parkinson’s disease: www.hartmanfoundation.org

Clearly, the Church favors ethically acceptable stem cell research. It opposes destroying human lives now, on the pretext that this may possibly help other lives in the future. We must respect life at all times.
Catholic teaching offers a unique perspective on crime and punishment. It begins with the recognition that the dignity of the human person applies to both victims and offenders. It affirms our commitment to comfort and support victims and their families, while acknowledging the God-given dignity of every human life, even those who do great harm.

Catholic teaching on human life begins with the belief that life is a gift from God that is not for us to take away. As it is applied to the death penalty, this teaching is both complicated and clear. The Church has long acknowledged the right of the state to use the death penalty in order to protect society. However, the Church has more and more clearly insisted the state should forgo this right if it has other means to protect society. Our fundamental respect for every human life and for God, who created each person in his image, requires that we choose not to end a human life in response to violent crimes if non-lethal options are available.

Pope John Paul II, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Vatican *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, and statements from U.S. bishops are all clear and consistent that the use of the death penalty ought to be abandoned in our nation because we have alternative ways to protect society.

In his encyclical the Gospel of Life, Pope John Paul II challenges followers of Christ to be “unconditionally pro-life,” willing to “proclaim, celebrate and serve the Gospel of life in every situation.” He reminds us that “the dignity of human life must never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil. Modern society has the means of protecting itself, without definitively denying criminals the chance to reform.” (27) The cases where society could not defend itself, according to the Pope, “are very rare if not practically nonexistent.” *(The Gospel of Life, #56)*
Abortion, Contraception, Natural Family Planning

By Fr. Frank Pavone

There is a close link between abortion and contraception. Natural Family Planning, furthermore, provides a solution to both. The Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* has been and will remain a prophetic voice in the Church bearing witness to these truths. Pope John Paul II's *Evangelium Vitae* likewise explains the connection between abortion and contraception as "fruits of the same tree."

In their 2001 revision of the Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities (*A Campaign in Support of Life*), the United States Catholic Bishops speak of the connection between abortion and contraception in the following paragraphs:

*Abortion and Contraception*

The Church's teaching and pastoral efforts on responsible parenthood are appropriately treated more fully in other documents. However, we address the issue here, because some promote widespread use of contraception as a means to reduce abortions and even criticize the Church for not accepting this approach.

It is noteworthy that as acceptance and use of contraception have increased in our society, so have acceptance and use of abortion. Couples who unintentionally conceive a child while using contraception are far more likely to resort to abortion than others. Tragically, our society has fallen into a mentality that views children as a burden and invites many to consider abortion as a "backup" to contraceptive failure. This is most obvious in efforts to promote as "emergency contraception" drugs that really act as early abortifacients.

With Pope John Paul II we affirm that contraception and abortion are "specifically different evils," because only "the latter destroys the life of a human being," but that they are also related (The Gospel of Life, no. 13). It is important to remember the means that are referred to as "contraceptive" are, in reality, sometimes also abortifacient. An end to abortion will not come from contraceptive campaigns but from a deeper understanding of our human sexuality, and of human life, as sacred gifts deserving our careful stewardship.
What is Natural Family Planning?

*Natural Family Planning* refers to natural methods for achieving and avoiding pregnancy that are based on the observation of the naturally occurring signs and symptoms of the fertile and infertile phases of the menstrual cycle. Couples using natural family planning methods to avoid pregnancy abstain from intercourse and genital contact during the fertile phase of the woman’s cycle. No drugs, devices or surgical procedures are used to avoid pregnancy.

**There are two primary methods of NFP:** the *Ovulation Method* and the *Sympto-Thermal Method.*

**The Ovulation Method:** Through understanding and charting the presence or absence of cervical mucus, the woman learns to recognize the fertile and infertile phases of her menstrual cycle.

**The Sympto-Thermal Method:** Through understanding the cervical mucus symptom, cervical changes, and the changes in basal body temperature, the woman learns to identify the fertile and infertile phases of her menstrual cycle.

**Who can use NFP?** Any married couple can use NFP! A woman need not have “regular” cycles. Natural methods can be used throughout a woman’s reproductive life cycle. NFP education helps couples to fully understand their combined fertility, thereby helping them to either achieve or avoid pregnancy. The key to successful use of NFP is cooperation and communication between husband and wife—a shared commitment. NFP is unique among methods of family planning because it enables its users to work with the body rather than against it. Fertility is viewed as a reality to life, not a problem to be solved.

**How effective is NFP?** When couples understand the methods and are motivated, NFP is up to 99% successful in spacing or limiting births. The effectiveness of NFP depends upon the spouses’ commitment to following the rules of the method according to their family planning intention. NFP instruction helps a couple to identify the most opportune time to achieve as well as avoid pregnancy. Understanding that intercourse or genital contact during the fertile time can result in pregnancy, couples using natural methods must be clear regarding their family planning intention—that is their desire to achieve or avoid pregnancy. No artificial methods are used. These would interfere with the woman’s observations of her fertility signs.

**NFP and the Catholic Church:** Because Natural Family Planning respects the inseparable connection between the life-giving and love-giving aspects of sexual intercourse, it is in accord with Catholic Church teaching on sexuality and marriage. NFP also fosters growth in a deeper understanding of the gift of sexuality and promotes marital chastity.
In addition, couples using NFP come to a greater understanding of “children as the supreme gift of marriage”. Quoting Pope John Paul, “conjugal love, while leading the spouses to reciprocal ‘knowledge’ which makes them ‘one flesh’ does not end with the couple, because it makes them capable of the greatest possible gift, the gift by which they become cooperators with God for the giving of life to a new human person.” (Familiaris consortio)

**What are the signs of fertility?** A woman’s body provides basic ways to identify the fertile and infertile phases of her cycle. Recognizing the pattern of those physical signs forms the basis for all methods of NFP. A primary sign of fertility is the mucus released from the woman’s cervix. “A woman learns to identify the normal, healthy mucus pattern which indicates when intercourse is most likely to result in pregnancy. The second sign is her basal body temperature. Due to hormonal activity, a woman’s resting temperature changes during her menstrual cycle. Lower temperatures indicate ovulation has not occurred. Higher temperatures signal the end of the fertile time. Secondary signs can also be identified. Learning these signs through NFP instruction, the couple can then use this information to effectively plan their family.

**How does NFP affect the marriage relationship?** Couples frequently note the following positive effects of living the Church teaching on sexuality in marriage through natural family planning. NFP…

- Enriches the bond between husband and wife
- Compliments the life giving & love giving aspects of sexual intercourse
- Promotes openness to life and the value of the child
- Is effective for achieving, spacing and avoiding pregnancy
- Fosters respect for and acceptance of the total person
- Has no adverse side effects
- Is low cost
- Promotes shared responsibility for family planning
- Is morally acceptable

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**Diocesan NFP Classes:** To register for classes in your area, contact the NFP teachers directly. Ovulation Method:

- **Decatur** – Donna Dausman: (217) 422-4534
- **Effingham** – Tessie Kabbes: (217) 347-8784
- **Springfield** – Cynthia Vivian: (217) 483-6410

**Office for Family and Youth Ministry** – (217) 698-8500

In addition to the diocesan NFP classes, symptothermo classes by the Couple to Couple League are independently available. Call Joan & John Kane in Alton at (618) 466-4410 & Kathy & Frank Jamboretz in Quincy at (217) 222-8729.

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**Copyright Permission given from Diocese of Springfield in Illinois:** Office for Family & Youth Ministry – (217) 698-8500 – email: ddausman@dio.org
Some Background: A growing community of concern has taken a fresh look at what it means to be disabled. The lexicon will continue to evolve, just as it has in any other community which struggles to move beyond the negative stereotypes of the past. The following ideas reflect current thought developed within the disability leadership.

An Expanding Community of Concern: Each year medical and rehabilitation techniques and technology salvage lives which would have been lost a generation ago. This rapidly expanding group of individuals looks forward to new opportunities and challenges. The challenge of the 1978 Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities, that people with disabilities be offered the opportunity to participate fully in the celebrations and obligations of membership within our faith community, still guides our efforts toward inclusion. Implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 brings with it federal guarantees of equity and dignity for 49 million citizens who have too long awaited recognition of their gifts.

A Common Yet Unique Experience: The risks, stresses and strains of the living process result in the development of assorted impairments. These may occur early in life or in old age. They can result from alterations in an individual's gene code, in utero, during the birth process, or later in life. Each person's journey toward disability is highly personal and unique, just as each of us is unique. Our shared vulnerability means that the development of such disabilities is less an individual tragedy than an experience which grows more common with each passing year. In fact, some limitation in function is completely normal for an increasing number of citizens. Thus, future plans in all aspects of the Church and society must include recognition that access for those who currently have disabilities is insurance for all.

Looking More Specifically At Language

Impairments: Impairments are the physiological glitches which hamper one or more basic life functions. These include physical, sensory, mental, and emotional difficulties. This word is most closely associated with medical aspects of the experiencing of human vulnerability.

Disabilities: A disability is the personal experiencing of those limitations and impairments mentioned above. One moves through the world “with” a disability. While there is an emphasis on use of the phrase, “people with disabilities”, there has also been a sense that the commonality of experience requires a designation which stresses the union of one person to all others who share the pain of exclusion and discrimination on the basis of assorted impairments. As the Americans with Disabilities Act has recognized those with disabilities as members of the newest minority, many now speak of the disability community with emphasis on the commonality of disability, rather than emphasizing the separateness of each individual.
**Handicaps:** The word “handicapped” was used in past legislation. Currently it is used to describe the relationship between one who has an impairment and the environmental features which hamper function.

**Using These Words in Context:**

“I have an impairment.”

“It is a medical condition which hampers my vision or hearing, my mobility or my comprehension.”

“I have a disability.”

“I have some difficulty seeing or hearing, moving my body or understanding everything quickly and clearly.”

“I am handicapped.”

“There is no braille agenda, therefore I am handicapped by those who planned this meeting.”

“There is no ramp into this building, therefore I am handicapped in my attempts to worship.”

“There is no assistant to help me read all these signs, therefore I am handicapped in finding my way to the classroom.”

“There is no captioning for this videotape, therefore I am handicapped in sharing in my parish’s adult education program.”

*This article may be reprinted provided you credit the source: Opening Doors, National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities, Washington, DC 1997*