

PRO-LIFE E-NEWS

*Respect Life Office
Diocese of Worcester*

- FALL 2007 -



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October is Respect Life Month!



The new edition of the Respect Life Program, produced annually by the USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, is now available for download at:

<http://www.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rlp/rlp0708.shtml>

This year's theme is taken from Luke's Gospel (1:44): “The Infant in My Womb Leaped for Joy.” Begun in 1972, the Respect Life program brings Church teaching on the value and dignity of human life to the Catholic community and the wider public. The program combines education, prayer, service, and advocacy. Respect Life Sunday is observed in Catholic dioceses throughout the United States. Components of the program include a series of articles on current life issues topics and liturgy guide.

The eight pamphlets in this year's packet address a broad array of topics: assisted reproductive technology, caring for aging loved ones, the failure of contraception to reduce abortions, discovering hope and love after an adverse prenatal diagnosis, the abortion-

breast cancer link, the respect owed to persons who are mentally ill, and Project Rachel post-abortion ministry.

The Liturgy Guide includes intercessions for life; suggested preaching reflections for Respect Life Sunday and January 22, the anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade decision that legalized abortion; a novena for life ending on the Feast of the Visitation; and a rosary for life with meditations on the Joyful Mysteries.

All parishes in the Worcester diocese receive copies of the print edition of the Respect Life Program every September in preparation for Respect Life Sunday, which falls this year on October 7th. This resource can be utilized throughout the year by clergy, Respect Life committees, religious educators, and other ministries.

REMEMBER TO UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION!

Our e-mail list continues to grow! E-mail is a timely and cost-effective way of sharing the Good News with all who participate in the mission of living the Gospel of Life. If your e-mail address changes, please let us know so that we can update our records, and encourage others to subscribe to our e-mail list. To subscribe, send an email with your contact information to: aledoux@worcesterdiocese.org.

Celebrating Life: Some Ideas for Respect Life Month

- Distribute materials to parishioners such as the new flyer from this year's Respect Life Program (available through your parish kit or download at www.usccb.org), or other articles from the program series.
- Distribute copies of "A Prayer for Life" cards, also available from the USCCB.
- Publish website links in your parish bulletin or school newsletter where people can learn more about life issues. Some useful sites are listed further on in this newsletter.
- Make people aware of the ministries and agencies that offer pastoral care. *Project Rachel* offers healing and reconciliation to those who have been wounded by abortion (brochures and clip-art for parish bulletins are available from the Diocesan Respect Life Office). Organizations such as *Problem Pregnancy* and *Visitation House* offer life-giving support and assistance to women facing crisis pregnancies. Contact information for these resources is found further on in this newsletter.
- Incorporate ideas from the *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities* into parish ministries, religious education programs, and Catholic School classrooms.
- Host a presentation on life issues topics in your parish. Contact the Diocesan Respect Life Office for assistance (508) 929-4311.
- Renew the practice of praying a novena, with the "Novena for Life" or utilize other resources for prayer found in the Respect Life Program Liturgy Guide or available at www.usccb.org/prolife/liturgy/index.shtml. The Evangelium Vitae prayer, which can be found at the end of the encyclical or in [Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers](#), is a nice addition to a parish bulletin, or to use in schools to begin or end the day.

Annual Life Chain: A Special Way to Observe Respect Life Sunday

This year's Worcester County LIFE CHAIN will be held on Respect Life Sunday, October 7, 2007 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. All are invited to join in prayer at this annual event, to be held rain or shine. The Life Chain Stations will be at White City Plaza in Shrewsbury, at Elm Park and at Denny's parking lot on Lincoln Street. Signs may also be picked up at these locations at the time of the event.

The Life Chain is a national event. Its nature is not that of a demonstration, but rather one of peaceful and prayerful witness to life. People of all ages are touched by its beauty and powerful message. Invite family and friends to join you in spending this special time on Respect Life Sunday uniting with others in prayer for an end to abortion and a renewed respect for the sanctity of human life. For further information, contact: June Johnson 508-755-0162 or Louise Faiola 508-756-1150.



Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATES!

Sunday, September 30: Knights of Columbus annual Pro-Life Mass – 10:15 a.m. – Cathedral of St. Paul, Worcester. All are welcome.

Fri/Sat, October 5 -6: Praying for an end to Abortion

A 24-Hour Rosary to pray for an end to abortion will be held on **Oct. 5-6**, at Blessed Sacrament Parish in the Epiphany House Chapel, 551 Pleasant St., Worcester. Recitation of the Rosary will begin after the 8:00 a.m. Mass on Friday, October 5th and concluding with 8:00 a.m. Mass on Sat., Oct. 6th. Mass will also be celebrated at 7:00 p.m. on Friday. All are welcome to attend. Two people per hour are also needed to lead the rosary. Those interested in reserving an hour should contact Paula Bushey at (508) 755-5822.

Sunday, October 7: Respect Life Sunday

Observations in local parishes

Annual Life Chain, 2:00-3:30 p.m. Elm Park, Worcester

Thursday, November 8: Chastity Promotion Event at St. Peter-Marian

Silver Ring Thing is a nonprofit organization that promotes chastity, second virginity, marriage, and waiting for your future spouse. An event aimed at high schoolers, the presentation utilizes a modern spin of humor, movie spoofs, music, skits, and talks from real people whom the audience can relate to. This event is being hosted by Saint Peter-Marian Central Catholic Senior High School in Worcester on November 8, 2007. If you are interested in bringing a group or would like to help out by raising money for the event by a bake sale, car wash, etc. please contact Nicole Alarie at 508-886-6031.

Monday, January 21: **Respect Life Mass**, 7:30 p.m., St. Paul Cathedral
Departure of busses for Washington

Tuesday, January 22: **Day of Prayer and Penance**
March for Life, Washington, DC
(trip registration information will be available in late fall)

Saturday, March 29: **Day of Reflection and Renewal** for those in Pro-Life Ministry
9:30–3:30, concluding with 4:00 p.m. Mass, Vigil of the Feast of
Divine Mercy, Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Webster
(registration details to be announced)

Monday, March 31: **Mass for Life**, 10:00 a.m., St. Paul Cathedral
Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord

Article: The Miracle of Little Maria's Rescue from Abortion

THIS ARTICLE IS REPRINTED FROM LifeSiteNews.com

September 5, 2007 (LifeSiteNews.com) - At numerous North American abortion clinics dedicated, prayerful pro-life sidewalk counselors attempt to save mothers and their babies from abortion. Many babies are in fact saved and their mothers helped to continue with the pregnancy and raise their saved children. What is not widely known are the often amazing, unexplainable occurrences that result in many of these successes. LifeSiteNews staff have heard numerous such stories which are sometimes enough to cause tears or raise goose bumps on one's skin. The following is one such story about the uncanny appearance of a stranger who made all the difference in the world (or shall we also say, out of this world) to the life of little Maria. The story was first told to LifeSiteNews.com's Steve Jalsevac and John-Henry Westen while they were staying at the home of pro-life friend Boots Sargis during last year's Washington March for Life events. The story can now be told because little Maria was born last week.

"Maria" by Boots Sargis

It was a cold Saturday morning last December when I arrived at the local abortion facility that I have been going to for years. I was late and most of the other regular sidewalk counselors and prayer ministry people were already there. George was standing at the North driveway across the side street from the 7-11 store. For the first time, we decided to trade cell phone numbers.

I walked up the street and stood at the South driveway praying for the opportunity to offer hope and help to the hopeless who would be entering the abortion facility.

My cell phone rang. It was George. He said "Quick, I need someone who speaks Spanish." Normally there is a Spanish speaking sidewalk counselor available, but not on this particular morning. What could we do?

I asked the small groups of people who were praying the rosary if anyone spoke Spanish. No one did. I was wearing a small poster of Our Lady of Guadalupe which had been touched to the Tilma of Juan Diego in Mexico. I prayed and put the situation in her loving hands. George directed me across the side street to the couple who were looking at the Spanish pro-life literature which he had given them. The fact that they had possession of the literature itself was a small miracle.

It has been said that "the battle lines are drawn" in front of the abortion facilities. This is the truth. Good confronts evil there, and we pray that it is always with prayer, love and compassion.

Besides the pro-lifers there is a group of pro-abortion "escorts" always present. They escort the women from their cars into the facility in order to make sure the women go through with their abortions and avoid us. Usually the escorts tell the women that we are not telling the truth, want to harass them, and that they should ignore us.

When someone who has come for an abortion takes our informative literature, the "escorts" take it from them with a variety of unholy explanations. Some of these escorts are trying to justify their own abortions, some are there because of disordered logic and misplaced charity, and some only God knows.

As I approached, the young couple was deeply engrossed in the literature. I smiled and said "no habla espanol." I

was feeling anxious because I knew that it was only a matter of time before one of the "escorts" crossed the street to take the literature and them ... to the abortionist. "Cafe?" The word came out of my mouth. "That's a good idea, I thought. Where did it come from?" Buying a cup of coffee at the 7-11 would remove them from "escort" territory.

As we walked toward the 7-11, it occurred to me that there might be someone inside who spoke Spanish and English and who would be willing to at least translate for us. Just then the door opened and out came a nicely dressed man with black hair who looked like he was in his mid-30's. I asked this complete stranger, not knowing anything about his views on abortion, if he would be willing to translate.

I explained as discretely as I could that this frightened young couple was seeking an abortion, and that I wanted them to know that our church was ready to help with material, spiritual and emotional support. We would do everything we could to help them.

Enrico (the stranger) paused at this totally unexpected request, looked at me and then said, "This is a very good thing that you are doing. Let me talk to them." I was able to understand a little of what Enrico was saying as he offered support on behalf of the church in a very normal tone of voice.

Suddenly, his voice became passionate and louder. Tears welled in his eyes. At that moment I knew that Enrico himself had been personally involved in an abortion, another father who suffers silently.

He then began to tell me in English what he was telling Tomaso and Rosa in Spanish. He told them that seventeen years ago he lost his son to abortion, and that he has thought of him every day since. He said that he was deeply in love with the very beautiful mother of his son. After the abortion, they were unable to look at each other without thinking of the dead baby, and as a result they separated.

Enrico continued to talk to the couple for over 20 minutes; he was heaven sent. Never could we have found a better sidewalk counselor. He even told Tomaso that he would help him find work. Tomaso and Rosa, who had a two year old child at home, were deeply affected by Enrico's counsel. They confided that they were seeking the abortion because they had no money or resources for another child.

It was now around 8:15 a.m. Enrico had to continue on to work, so another sidewalk counselor, Rich, and I invited Tomaso and Rosa to the 8:30 Mass with the idea that we would speak with the priests afterwards and make an appointment at the crisis pregnancy center.

The priests at our parish were compassionate and helpful. The Spanish speaking priest spoke to them for quite awhile. Tomaso wasn't sure if he ever had been baptized, but he was already talking about the Baptism of his child. I pointed out to him that God must have a very special job for his child because HE certainly went to a lot of trouble to protect her.

Candy happened to be praying in Church when we arrived with Tomaso and Rosa. From that day until now she has taken on the role of "abuelita" ... Grandmother. She has been an angel to all of us as translator, driver, encourager, prayer support, and more. Rich also has been ever so helpful to this struggling and brave couple who chose life. Our parish pro-life groups, Project Gabrielle, Catholics United for Life, and St. Anne's Helpers for Life have delivered on the promises that we made that December morning. Little Maria was born on July 27th. Truly she is the most beautiful little one I have ever seen in my life. Maybe it's because I know how close she came to being destroyed... Murdered in the womb. When you hold her, the reality of abortion seems impossible. How could it be? This precious little bundle of life is the answer to every abortion debate.

Rosa and Tomaso are filled with joy. It is beautiful to see them lovingly care for their little one. Now each year they will celebrate the birthday of their child in July instead of dreading the anniversary of her death in December. It's a tragedy that the country that offered them a better life gave them the choice of destroying it.

I hope and pray that some who read this story might consider joining the groups who pray in front of abortion facilities. We Christians should be there with compassion and love for the unborn in their final hours and to intercede for their parents.

Once a woman stopped to tell us that her daughter had made an appointment for an abortion the previous week. When she arrived and saw people praying the rosary, she found the strength to leave and to tell her parents of the life in her womb. The grandmother returned to thank us for being there and for giving her grandchild a birth day in the future.

All Christians have a responsibility to stand against this destroyer that our society calls "choice." When we face Our Lord someday, will we be able to say that we defended these victims ... mothers, fathers, babies? That we worked for the truth? We are all accountable at some level, and there are many ways to stand for life.

Some who really cannot be present at the facilities pray at home or in Church for the women who are considering abortion. There are many other ways to help including volunteering at local crisis pregnancy centers and joining the many pro-life ministries.

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“The Future Depends on Love” is an initiative of the Massachusetts Catholic Conference being implemented in all four dioceses in the commonwealth on the vocation of marriage. The four-fold purpose of this project includes:

- 1) to educate and inspire Catholics about the vocation of marriage and its importance in the Church and in society;
- 2) to motivate and equip the Catholic laity to become well-informed and articulate participants in the public debate on marriage and family;
- 3) to influence public policy and legislation by faithful and public witness to those foundational moral values that inform the Church’s teaching about marriage, family and the common good of society;
- 4) to help fellow Catholics, family members, neighbors and friends retrieve the “common sense” and traditional understanding of marriage as the life-long union of a husband and wife, open to the gift of children.

The three important elements that comprise this initiative are *prayer, education, and public witness.*

Catholics in parishes throughout the commonwealth received copies of the Holy Family Prayer Card early this summer and have been asked to regularly pray the “Daily Marriage Prayer”. This foundation of prayer is critical to the success of a renewal of the understanding of and appreciation for the great gift of the sacrament and vocation of marriage and the blessings of family, in the church and in society.

Please continue to join in praying daily as we work to build a Culture of Life and a Civilization of Love!



Daily Marriage Prayer

*Heavenly Father, through the intercession of the Holy Family,
help us treasure the gift of marriage that reflects
the love of Christ for the Church,
where the self-giving love of husband and wife
unites them more perfectly and cooperates
in Your divine plan for new life created in Your image.
Help us support men and women in their vocation of marriage,
especially in difficult times when they join
their sufferings to the Cross.
Help us uphold the institution of marriage in our society
as the place where love is nurtured and family life begins.
Help us acknowledge that our future depends on this love
and on Your providential care for us. Amen.*

PLEASE PRAY DAILY FOR THE VOCATION OF MARRIAGE.

Nihil Obstat: Reverend Mark O’Connell, J.C.D.
Imprimature: Sean Cardinal O’Malley, OFM Cap.
Archbishop of Boston
May 15, 2007

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Thank you for your support of this important work of the Church!

