



Fall 2008

The Gift of Life

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Newletter of the Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Worcester, MA
Visit us at: www.worcesterdiocese.org (click on “Respect Life” under the departments tab)

Legislative Seminar – September 25th

On Thursday, Sept. 25, the Respect Life Office and the Diocese of Worcester will welcome Loretta Fleming, field coordinator for **The National Committee for a Human Life Amendment (NCHLA)** who will present a legislative seminar.

This presentation is designed to provide diocesan leaders, parish coordinators and other interested parties with the

tools they need to develop effective legislative advocacy and will include updates on federal legislation, special projects and new educational materials.

NCHLA is the public policy arm of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and works closely with the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities.

All are welcome! Please join us on Thursday, Sept. 25 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Paul’s Cathedral Cenacle.

Pre-registration is recommended – contact the Respect Life Office at (508)929-4311 or email: aledoux@worcesterdiocese.org by Sept. 24.



Calendar of Events

2008-2009

September 25, 2008 - NCHLA Legislative Seminar with Loretta Fleming
7:00 p.m., Cathedral of St. Paul Cenacle, Worcester

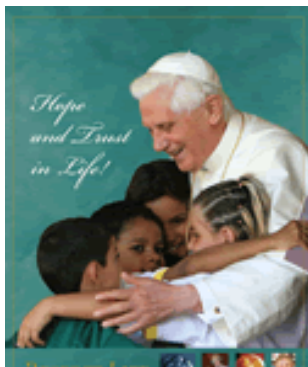
October 5, 2008 - Respect Life Sunday
Annual Respect Life Program begins
Parish observances
Local Life Chain

January 21, 2009 - Respect Life Mass
Followed by departure of busses for Washington, DC
7:30 p.m. Cathedral of St. Paul, Worcester

January 22, 2009 - March for Life, Washington, DC

March 26, 2009 - Annual Mass for Life
Celebration of the Feast of the Annunciation
and presentation of annual pro-life awards
10:00 a.m., Cathedral of St. Paul, Worcester

Annual Respect Life Program - *new for 2008-2009!*



"The proclamation of life, life in abundance, must be the heart of the new evangelization."

- Pope Benedict XVI

"Hope and Trust in Life!" is the theme of this year's Respect Life Program, produced annually by the USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities for dioceses throughout the United States.

The packet will be mailed to all parishes and Catholic schools in the Diocese of Worcester in early September to help in making preparations for Respect Life Sunday on October 5th.

The program packet is an excellent tool for parish Respect Life Committees, religious education programs, and a variety of other parish ministries. The articles, reflections,

poster, liturgy guide, CD-Rom, and more provide educational resources on a variety of life issues for use throughout the year.

Some of this year's **articles** include:

- "Stem Cells and New Hope for Patients" by Maureen Condic
- "Conscience and the Catholic Voter" by Bishop William Lori
- "The Hollow Men: Male Grief and Trauma Following Abortion" by Vincent Rue

In the **Liturgy Guide** are included homily aids and intercessions for Respect Life Sunday and the January 22 Day of Prayer and Penance. There is a

section called "Prayers for Life Throughout the Year" which includes blessings for babies and parents before and after birth, prayers for the pre-born, the disabled, the elderly, and the dying. There are also prayers and meditations for the Stations of the Cross for Life. Here in the Diocese of Worcester, we join our gratitude with that of the USCCB Pro-Life Secretariat for the wonderful work of Monsignor James Moroney, now rector of St. Paul's Cathedral, for his work in preparing these liturgical resources!

The program materials can also be accessed on-line at: www.usccb.org/prolife/program_srlp/rlp0809.shtml.

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

Every four years the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops renews the call to Catholics to exercise faithful citizenship. The recent revision of this document, "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship", is well worth reading in this election year. It can be downloaded at www.faithfulcitizenship.org. Also on this site are a multitude of useful resources for parishes, schools, and other groups.

Recently, the Worcester Diocese's TV Ministry produced "Called to Faithful Citizenship" as part of the Conversations with Bishop McManus series.

The program can be viewed on-line here: <http://homepage.mac.com/tvmin/Menu11.html>, and provides an excellent discussion of the issues affecting the fundamental dignity of the human person in relation to the obligations of the Catholic voter in the political process.

"What faith teaches about the dignity of the human person and about the sacredness of every human life helps us see more clearly the same truths that also come to us through the gift of human reason. At the center of these truths is respect for the dignity of every person. This is the core of Catholic moral and social teaching.

Because we are people of both faith and reason, it is appropriate and necessary for us to bring this essential truth about human life and dignity to the public square. We are called to practice Christ's commandment to "love one another" (John 13:34). We are also called to promote the well-being of all, to share our blessings with those most in need, to defend marriage, and to protect the lives and dignity of all, especially the weak, the vulnerable, the voiceless. In his first encyclical letter, Deus Caritas Est, Pope Benedict XVI explained that "charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as 'social charity'" (no. 29).

~ Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, n. 10



The Future Depends on Love

The marriage initiative of the Massachusetts Catholic Conference, has launched its education component in parishes statewide. The title, "The Future Depends on Love", is taken from Karol Wojtyla's (Pope John Paul II) play, "The Jeweler's Shop" in which he explored fundamental and insightful concerns about love.

The initiative began last year with a prayer campaign in which parishes statewide prayed the "Daily Marriage Prayer" when thousands of prayer cards bearing the image of the Holy Family were distributed.

Beginning this fall expect to see a variety of special resources in your parish aimed to renew and deepen our understanding of the beauty of Catholic marriage. These will include bulletin quotes, bulletin inserts containing articles on various aspects of marriage, DVD presentations, speakers and discussion groups. A cable television series has been produced by Boston Catholic TV and will soon be available on-line. Speaker training sessions will be held in different areas of the state, the first being held in Worcester on Sept. 10. Designed to equip people to make presentations and facilitate

discussion on Catholic teaching on marriage, interested parties may contact the MCC to make application.

An article from The Catholic Free Press on the introductory resource seminar for parishes is available at this link: www.catholicfreepress.org/Pages/This%20Week/0822diocese.html

Visit www.masscatholicmarriage.org to preview the materials. More resources are being added on a regular basis.



MARRIAGE. Where life and love transform the world!

Humanae vitae at 40

July 25, 2008 marked the fortieth anniversary of one of the most profound papal encyclicals of our time, Pope Paul VI's *Humanae vitae* (*Of Human Life*). It is a document well worth taking the time to read and reflect upon, providing magnificent insight and teaching on God's plan for married love. Forty years later it is very clear to see the prophetic nature of this great encyclical. Many articles have been written in recent months reflecting on this significant anniversary.

During this fortieth anniversary year, we will periodically post some resources for your reflection on this pivotal document.

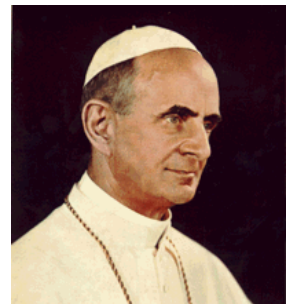
Human Life International has established a special website on Humanae Vitae. Numerous articles with very insightful reading can be found at: www.humanaevitae priests.org.

Professor Janet Smith's widely acclaimed talk, "Contraception, Why Not", is available on audio CD from One More Soul: www.omsoul.com. The complete transcript can also be read here: www.catholiceducation.org/articles/sexuality/se0002.html

Please take the time to read the insightful article that appears on the next page of this newsletter, "A Child's Hope, A Parent's Mission" which was written by Theresa Notare, assistant director of the US Bishops' Natural Family Planning Program. The article was first published in the April 2008 edition of *Life Issues Forum*, a column of the USCCB Pro-Life Secretariat.

The official English translation of *Humanae vitae* can be found at:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html





“The family is the best environment for nurturing children. It’s the building block of society, where children can learn how to love and give.”

“A Child’s Hope, A Parent’s Mission

by Theresa Notare

Eleven-year-old Andrew is an only child. He comes from a loving family and lives in a nice middle-class neighborhood. He goes to Catholic school, serves at Mass, plays baseball and videogames, and has neighborhood friends. What could be missing from this happy childhood? Andrew will tell you—a brother or sister!

Andrew has been hounding his parents lately for a sibling. He recently discussed his problems with me because I’m his aunt who happens to work for the Church. He explained that he needs a sibling not just to play with now, but to be with “when we’re old.” He reasoned: “What would my parents do if I become a priest and they don’t have any grandchildren? They need back-up!” I remarked that having children wasn’t only for the parents and kids—“it’s also for the world.” His eyes lit up as he exclaimed: “T, that’s right, that’s the circle of life! Don’t they know that?”

Andrew’s hopes for a sibling are worth reflecting on. They reveal what we all want in our families—to love and be loved—and also point to a central aspect of the mission of married couples—to have and care for children. Society places economic

and psychological burdens on husbands and wives. So it is critical to remind married couples that their generosity to life is key to the future happiness of all.

The family is the best environment for nurturing children. It’s the building block of society, where children can learn how to love and give. And the family is the “little church”—the place where children learn about God and salvation. A healthy, holy family contributes to the well-being of its members and the nation.

Today many married couples are convinced they should limit the size of their families to one or two children at most. People who study population have begun to raise alarms about disastrous consequences from married couples choosing not to have any children. Humanity’s future is endangered when the numbers of retired elderly people greatly exceeds those in the work force.

The fortieth anniversary of Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Humanae vitae* (*Of Human Life*) will be celebrated on July 25, 2008. That encyclical addresses the Church’s teaching on married love and the gift of life,

illuminating God’s plan for spouses, especially with regard to procreation.

Catholics, especially the engaged and married, should prayerfully reflect on *Humanae vitae*. This prophetic document beautifully and insightfully presents Christian teachings on married love and its unitive and procreative nature. It describes the “total vision” of men and women that is not man-made, but “Divinely designed.” “Children,” the encyclical states, “are the supreme gift of marriage and contribute very substantially to the welfare of their parents.” As my nephew Andrew says: “They provide back-up!”

In the fortieth-anniversary year of *Humanae vitae*, do yourself and your family a favor—read *Humanae vitae* and pray. Pray that the Holy Spirit helps you understand and embrace God’s design for life and love. Pray that more couples will realize that God is calling them to open their homes to another child. Children, after all, are our hope for the future!

Theresa Notare, MA, is the Assistant Director of the Natural Family Planning Program of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC.

