

Respect Life Winter 2014 Meeting

- **Opening Prayer**

O God, our Creator, all life is in your hands from conception until God calls us home. Help us to cherish our children and to reverence the awesome privilege of our share in creation. May all people live and die in dignity and love. Bless all those who defend the rights of the unborn, the handicapped and the aged. Enlighten and be merciful toward those who fail to love, and give them peace. Let freedom be tempered by responsibility, integrity and morality. Amen

- Sharon Mlinar (Our Lady of the Lake) and Deacon Chuck Amsberry (St. Michael - Portland) have joined the Core Life team, along with Jim Brey, Bianca Nerenberg and Becky Griffo).

- **Why We Gather, and how is it working?**

- Purpose of Quarterly Meetings: For the Office of LJP and other parish ministries to share strategies for success in order to strengthen *each* parish's Respect Life Ministry
- We respect Sacred Listening
- We work from a place of consensus, not divisiveness

Small Groups #1: We've been meeting since August 2010. How are you and your ministry different?

- **Pastoral Plan For Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign In Support Of Life**

The Pastoral Plan (see abbreviated version at the end of this document) contains commitment in four major areas:

1. Public Information and Education
2. Pastoral Care
3. Public Policy
4. Prayer and Worship

Fr. John Boyle, Director of the Tribunal for the Archdiocese of Portland, participated in the Walk for Life in San Francisco. As an example of "Prayer and Worship" Fr. John offered his reflections from the trip.

Small Groups #2: Does your parish Respect Life Ministry depend on you? That is, if you're no longer involved will the ministry continue to thrive? Using the Pastoral Plan brainstorm ideas to start or sustain your ministries.

Then discuss "What do you need from the Office of Life, Justice and Peace to help your ministry?" **[Note: please email the Office with your responses]**

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- **News, Issues and Events**
 - Update on Initiative Petition #6

(From the March JustPeace): Oregon 2014 Initiative is the measure for the November 2014 ballot that would prohibit the use of taxpayer money from being spent on elective abortions (not medically necessary). Oregon taxpayers fund 11 abortions every day through the Oregon Health Plan.

We need 150,000 signatures by May 11 – Mother’s Day.

This grassroots citizen initiative has been endorsed by the Archdiocese of Portland. In August, 2013, Vicar General Fr. Peter Smith sent a letter to all parishes with this statement: *“Catholics are strongly encouraged to support the Oregon 2014 Citizens Initiative. While the focus is narrow, any measure that strengthens life and improves the protection of unborn children is a good step forward.”*

The petition has already been circulated in dozens of Catholic churches, but to be successful we need every parish in the Archdiocese to participate in gathering signatures.

- **Upcoming Events:**

- **Saturday March 1: Portland-Beaverton 40 Days for Life Mass and Prayer Kickoff.** 8:00 a.m. at St. Cecilia Catholic Church, Beaverton.
With Archbishop Alexander Sample

9:00 a.m. - Procession to Planned Parenthood and Prayer Kick-off

Why You Want to Attend: Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenseless and innocent among us. ... Defense of unborn life is closely linked to the defense of each and every other human right. It involves the conviction that a human being is always sacred and inviolable, in any situation and at every stage of development. Human beings are ends in themselves and never a means of resolving other problems. *Pope Francis*

- **Friday April 4 – Saturday April 5: Opening a Horizon of Hope: Transformed by Christ to Love All, A Parish Social Ministry Regional Conference**
From Catholic Charities, USA, Catholic Charities of Oregon, St. Vincent de Paul, Office of Life, Justice and Peace, and Archdiocese of Seattle.
- **April 7-8: Adolescent Sexuality Conference: Building Blocks of Youth Sexual Health**
- **Saturday April 12: ORTL Annual Conference, Portland with Archbishop Sample**

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MAY MEETING: TUESDAY MAY 27, 7:00PM Bring someone else from your ministry; invite someone a neighboring parish.

- **Closing Prayer: Prayer for Reverence of Life**

All mighty God, giver of all that is good. We thank you for the precious gift of human life.

For life in womb, coming from your creative power → AMEN

For the life of children, making us glad with their freshness and promise → AMEN

For the life of young people, hoping for a better world → AMEN

For the life of the handicapped and disabled, teaching us humility → AMEN

For the life of the elderly, witnessing the ageless values of patience and wisdom → AMEN

Like Blessed Mary, may we always say yes to your gift. May we defend it and promote it from conception to its natural end and bring us at last oh Father to eternal life, in Jesus Christ our lord. AMEN

Pastoral Plan For Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign In Support Of Life

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.

- Blessed John Paul II, The Gospel of Life, no. 95

Introduction

We issue this Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign in Support of Life to put forth "a precise and vigorous reaffirmation of the value of human life and its inviolability, and at the same time a pressing appeal addressed to each and every person, in the name of God: respect, protect, love and serve life, every human life" (The Gospel of Life, no. 5).

As pastors and teachers, 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 social institutions, must protect and nurture human life at every stage of its existence. These beliefs flow from ordinary reason and from our faith's constant witness that "life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception" (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, no. 51)—a teaching that has been a constant part of the Christian message since the apostolic age.

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A Consistent Ethic of Life

A wide spectrum of issues touches on the protection of human life and the promotion of human dignity. As Pope John Paul II has 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 indivisible good" (The Gospel of Life, no. 87).

Among important issues involving the dignity of human life with which the Church is concerned, abortion necessarily plays a central role. Abortion, the direct killing of an innocent human being, is always gravely immoral (The Gospel of Life, no. 57); its victims are the most vulnerable and defenseless members of the human family. It is imperative that those who are called to serve the least among us give urgent attention and priority to this issue of justice.

This focus and the Church's commitment to a consistent ethic of life complement one another. A consistent ethic of life, which explains the Church's teaching at the level of moral principle—far from diminishing concern for abortion and euthanasia or equating all issues touching on the dignity of human life—recognizes instead the distinctive character of each issue while giving each its proper place within a coherent moral vision. As bishops of the United States we have issued pastoral letters on war and peace, economic justice, and other social questions affecting the dignity of human life—and we have implemented programs for advancing the Church's witness in these areas through parishes, schools, and other Church institutions (e.g., Communities of Salt and Light [1994]; Sharing Catholic Social Teaching [1998]). Taken together, these diverse pastoral statements and practical programs constitute no mere assortment of unrelated initiatives but rather a consistent strategy in support of all human life in its various stages and circumstances.

To focus on the evil of deliberate killing in abortion and euthanasia is not to ignore the many other urgent conditions that demean human dignity and threaten human rights. Opposing abortion and euthanasia "does not excuse indifference to those who suffer from poverty, violence and injustice. Any politics of human life must work to resist the violence of war and the scandal of capital punishment. Any politics of human dignity must seriously address issues of racism, poverty, hunger, employment, education, housing and health care" (Living the Gospel of Life, no. 23). We pray that Catholics will be advocates for the weak and the marginalized in all these areas. "But being 'right' in such matters can never excuse a wrong choice regarding direct attacks on innocent human life. Indeed, the failure to protect and defend life in its most vulnerable stages renders suspect any claims to the 'rightness' of positions in other matters affecting the poorest and least powerful of the human community" (Living the Gospel of Life, no. 23).

Rededication to the Cause of Life

In this Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign in Support of Life we renew our call for individual Catholics and the many institutions and organizations of the Church to unite in an unprecedented effort to restore respect and legal protection for every human life—to be what the Holy Father asks us to be: a people of life and a people for life (The Gospel of Life, no. 78). It is our hope and expectation that in focusing on the need to respect and protect the lives of the innocent unborn and those who are disabled, ill, or dying, we will help to deepen respect for the life of every human being.

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The Program

This pastoral plan calls upon all the resources of the Church—its people, services, and institutions—to pursue this effort with renewed energy and commitment in four major areas.

1. **Public Information and Education** to deepen understanding of the sanctity of human life and the humanity of unborn children, the moral evil of intentionally killing innocent human beings—whether at the beginning of life or at its end—and the mission of the Church to witness to and serve all human life.
2. **Pastoral Care** for women with problems related to pregnancy; for all who have been involved in abortion; for those who are disabled, sick, and dying, and their families and caregivers; for those who have lost loved ones to violent crime; and for those in prison sentenced to death.
3. **Public Policy** efforts directed to restoring legal protection to the lives of unborn children and those vulnerable to pressures to end their lives by assisted suicide, and to providing morally acceptable alternatives to abortion and assisted suicide.
4. **Prayer and Worship** directed to participation in the sacramental life of the Church and in programs of communal and individual prayer, that the culture of death that surrounds us today will be replaced by a culture of life and love.