The Church in the United States observes Respect Life Month every October. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops provides resources (https://www.respectlife.org/october) for individuals and organizations to promote Church teaching on respect for human life. The theme for October 2019 is Christ Our Hope: In Every Season of Life October 6th is Respect Life Sunday.

Biology textbooks and scientists agree: human life begins at conception

The textbook, Human Embryology & Teratology, explains: “Although life [defined broadly] is a continuous process, fertilization is a critical landmark because, under ordinary circumstances, a new, genetically distinct human organism is thereby formed.” Dr. Jerome Lejeune, discoverer of Down syndrome chromosome: “To accept the fact that after fertilization has taken place a new human has come into being is no longer a matter of taste or opinion. The human nature of the human being from conception to old age is not a metaphysical contention; it is plain experimental evidence.” Dr. Micheline Matthews-Roth, Harvard University Medical School: “It is scientifically correct to say that an individual human life begins at conception, when egg and sperm join to form the zygote, and this developing human always is a member of our species in all stages of its life.”

Philadelphia Abortionist Closes Clinic

Berger and Benjamin, LLP, has been performing abortions since 1978. However, after an inspection by the Pennsylvania Department of Health on June 24, 2019, the facility “voluntarily ceased services and relinquished their registration certificate.” Their website now states, “The office of Doctors Berger and Benjamin has closed.” With this closing, nine PA abortion clinics have closed since 2012. State inspections were mandated into law by the passage of new abortion clinic regulations in 2011, a major initiative by Pennsylvania Family Institute after the horrors of Kermit Gosnell’s clinic were revealed. After nearly a year’s battle in the legislature, the common-sense regulations finally passed into law, classifying abortion clinics as ambulatory surgical centers (treating any place that performs abortions like any other surgical facility). Five abortion clinics closed as a direct result of this new legislation when it went into effect in 2012. Another clinic in Harrisburg, Hillcrest Women’s Medical Center, was forced to shut down in 2017 after failing numerous health inspections. PAFamily.org, 9/26/19

Pro-life leaders: low abortion rates good, but...

The pro-life community is cheering a September 18 report released by the Guttmacher Institute that suggests the number and rate of abortions nationwide have fallen to their lowest levels since the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision legalized abortion on demand in 1973. For 2017—the last year for which full numbers were available—the institute recorded 862,000 abortions. That translates to 13.5 abortions per 1,000 women ages 15-44, a rate less than half of the 1990 count. The report attributed the decline in abortions to declines in births and pregnancies overall, rather than to any single reason such as wider legal restrictions and clinic closings. (During 2011—2017, 32 states enacted 394 new restrictions, with the vast majority of these measures having taken effect, i.e., not struck down by a court). "Although there has been a concerning 10% increase in chemical (Mifepristone, the RU-486 pill, used by women who are 10 weeks' pregnant or less) abortions, which are harder on women and have less medical oversight, there is an overall movement away from abortion, evidenced by consistent public opinion polls that show vast majorities want to restrict the practice," said Jeanne Mancini, president of the March-for-Life Education and Defense Fund, which holds an annual rally and March in Washington every January. TheBostonPilot.com, 9/23/19

Suicide Prevention

The Federal Communications Commission is moving forward with a plan to make “988” a national suicide prevention hotline number. “Crisis call centers have been shown to save lives,” said FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai. “This report recommends using a three-digit number to make it easier to access the critical suicide prevention and mental health services these call centers provide.” The number for the current National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255. thehill.com, 8/15/19
Euthanasia and Alzheimer’s Disease
An April, 2019 study in the Journal of the American Medical Association titled *Attitudes Toward Physician-Assisted Death From Individuals Who Learn They Have an Alzheimer Disease Biomarker* found that approximately 20% of cognitively normal older adults who had elevated beta-amyloid — a biomarker that is thought to increase the risk of Alzheimer’s disease — said they would consider physician-assisted suicide if they experienced a cognitive decline. Not everyone with amyloid plaques goes on to develop Alzheimer’s disease. Although no state with legalized physician-assisted suicide currently allows lethal overdoses for people with Alzheimer’s or other dementia, Emily Largent, JD, PhD, RN (one of the authors of the study) said, “Public support for aid-in-dying is growing...Now, we are seeing debates about whether to expand access to aid-in-dying to new populations who aren’t eligible under current laws. That includes people with neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s disease.” *LifeNews.com*, 8/13/19

Fighting LGBT Ideology
Archbishop Stanisław Gadecki, head of the Polish bishops' conference, vowed to fight LGBT ideology. “Respect for specific people cannot lead to accepting an ideology which aims at a revolution in social norms and interpersonal relations. This revolution in custom and morals, as Pope Francis stresses, often brandishes a flag of freedom, while in reality inflicting spiritual and material devastation,” he said. *catholicherald.co.uk*, 8/9/19

Delightful Narrative Helps Children Understand Their Lives Have Purpose
Published by Christian Faith Publishing, Michelle Falla’s new book, *Created to Shine*, is an uplifting prompt that will help children to know they are made by God to be a light, and that the omnipotent Creator loves His children all over the world, despite being different from each other. The book is the creation of published author Michelle Falla, a mother who desires to support parents as the primary spiritual mentor in a child's life. The book wonderfully unfolds the reason why they are meant to be a light, and that our talents weren't given to us for our own glory, but for God's glory. Even more, seeds of evangelism are planted throughout the book to encourage kids to share their childlike faith with others. Prayers, suggestions to serve, and activities to help grow your child’s faith are added in parents’ pages to give you more support in your journey. Consumers can purchase *Created to Shine* at traditional brick & mortar bookstores, or online at Amazon.com, Apple iTunes store, or Barnes and Noble. For additional information or inquiries about *Created to Shine*, contact the Christian Faith Publishing media department at 866-554-0919. *ChristianNewsWire.com*, 9/16/19

Abandoned Human Embryos Could Number in the Millions
According to Christine Allen, a fertility doctor who runs a consultant business called Elite IVF, most fertility clinics fertilize far more eggs than they plan to use when performing in vitro fertilization, leading to the practice of indefinitely freezing surplus embryos. Several fertility doctors told NBC News that many clinics consider embryos abandoned after patients stop paying storage fees and fail to respond to the clinic’s attempts to contact them. Approximately one-third of all the frozen embryos at a fertility clinic in Fort Myers have been discarded or abandoned. NBC News reported. Storage fees for frozen embryos typically run from $500 to $1,000 a year depending on the clinic. *NCR*, 8/14/19