

PRO-LIFE E-NEWS

Respect Life Office
Diocese of Worcester

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Annual March for Life



January 22, 2008 marks the 35th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton Supreme Court decisions that legalized abortion in the U.S. throughout all nine months of pregnancy.

Pro-Lifers from all across the country will again join in prayerful solidarity to participate in this year's March for Life in Washington, DC.

As of the distribution of this newsletter, there are still some bus seats available. Registrations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis and will continue until the busses are full. Please call the Respect Life Office at (508) 929-4311 for information.

In the Diocese of Worcester, busses will depart for the March for Life following a special Respect Life Mass at 7:30 p.m. at St. Paul Cathedral, Worcester, on Monday, Jan. 21. **ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS LITURGY** and join in prayer with those travelling to Washington. It is a good way to begin the vigil of the Jan. 22 Day of Prayer and Penance.

Coverage of the March for Life, and the Vigil Mass and Morning Mass at Washington, DC's Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception will be broadcast on EWTN (see www.ewtn.org for details).

Be sure to read The Catholic Free Press for local coverage of the March for Life and the January 22 Day of Prayer and Penance.

A letter from Bishop McManus will be available in parish bulletins the weekend of Jan. 19-20, and is also available at www.worcesterdiocese.org.

January 22 – A Day of Prayer and Penance

Following confirmation by the Holy See in February, 2002, the following became particular law for the dioceses of the United States of America:

"In all the dioceses of the United States of America, January 22 (or January 23, when the 22nd falls on a Sunday) shall be observed as a particular day of penance for violations to

the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life.

The Mass 'For Peace and Justice' (no. 21 from 'Masses for Various Needs') should be celebrated with violet vestments as an appropriate liturgical observance for this day."

As an "Optional Memorial," the Mass celebrated that day may be the Mass "For Peace and Justice" or follow the normal weekday Mass readings and prayers for the day found in the Ordo, with or without optional prayers related to St. Vincent of Saragossa whose Feast Day falls on January 22.

This particular law became mandatory in the dioceses of the U.S. for the first time on January 22, 2003.

All the faithful are encouraged to make special efforts to offer their prayers and sacrifices, whether personal and/or communal, for these intentions in regard to this observance of the January 22nd Day of Penance and Prayer.

"Filled with this certainty, and moved by profound concern for the destiny of every man and woman, I repeat what I said to those families who carry out their challenging mission amid so many difficulties: a great prayer for life is urgently needed, a prayer which will rise up throughout the world. Through special initiatives and in daily prayer, may an impassioned plea rise to God, the Creator and lover of life, from every Christian community, from every group and association, from every family and from the heart of every believer. Jesus himself has shown us by his own example that prayer and fasting are the first and most effective weapons against the forces of evil (cf. Mt 4:1-11). As he taught his disciples, some demons cannot be driven out except in this way (cf. Mk 9:29). Let us therefore discover anew the humility and the courage to pray and fast so that power from on high will break down the walls of lies and deceit: the walls which conceal from the sight of so many of our brothers and sisters the evil of practices and laws which are hostile to life. May this same power turn their hearts to resolutions and goals inspired by the civilization of life and love."

- Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 100

Observing the January 22nd Day of Prayer and Penance ***Ideas for personal prayer and communal practices***

- ❖ **Hold a "Holy Hour for Life" in your parish or with your parish cluster**
- ❖ **Make a private holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament, or in your home**
- ❖ **Go to daily Mass and offer it for an increased respect for human life**
- ❖ **Pray for those who have been wounded by abortion**
- ❖ **Say a Rosary or the Divine Mercy Chaplet**
- ❖ **Engage in some form of fasting**
- ❖ **Pray for those who work in the varied ministries in service of the dignity of the human person – crisis pregnancy counselors, hospice workers, clergy, pastoral care workers, medical professionals, etc.**
- ❖ **Prayerfully consider making a commitment to continuing your prayer for the dignity of human life on an on-going basis throughout the year – for example, saying one Hail Mary every day for an end to abortion**
- ❖ **Take some time during the month of January to read and reflect on Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Evangelium vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*)**



Additional Resources

Annual Respect Life Program: <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rlp/rlp0607.shtml>

A Holy Hour for Life: <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/liturgy/holyhourforlife.shtml>

Intercessions for Life: <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/liturgy/intercessions.shtml>

Text of *Evangelium vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*):

<http://www.usccb.org/prolife/tdocs/evangel/evangeli.htm>

Diocese of Worcester: www.worcesterdiocese.org

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops – Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities
www.usccb.org/prolife

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception: www.nationalshrine.com

Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATES!

Saturday, January 19: **Anna Maria College** will host a memorial Mass at 4:00 p.m. for pro-life advocate John Spillane. All are welcome. For further information contact the Molly Bish Center at Anna Maria College at 508) 849-3256.

Monday, January 21: **12 Hour Rosary and Prayers for Life** at St. Mary's Church, North Grafton, beginning with Mass at 8:00 a.m. followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. All are welcome.

Monday, January 21: **Respect Life Mass**, 7:30 p.m., St. Paul Cathedral. All are welcome! Departure of busses for Washington follows this Mass.

Tuesday, January 22: **Day of Prayer and Penance**
March for Life, Washington, DC
(*registration forms available at www.worcesterdiocese.org*)

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
Presentation of Annual Pro-Life Awards

Article: *Of Rosaries and Skateboards* by Tom Grenchik

A few days before Christmas, four skateboarders rescued a crying newborn baby who had been wrapped in a paper bag and abandoned in a neighborhood dumpster on one of the coldest nights of the year. The quick-thinking New York teens called 9-1-1, waited for the ambulance, and then accompanied the baby girl to the hospital where they learned that she survived only because of their alertness and their actions. None of these boys ever expected to be called on in such a dramatic way. Appropriately, they were considered heroes for saving the baby's life.

Even if we don't make it into the evening news, we are all called to be just as alert and active in protecting human life. There are always opportunities to respond. The 35th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* reminds us that our courts and legislatures still cling to the lie that human life can be discarded

whenever it is inconvenient. Abortion is still protected in our land. Had that dumpster been located behind an abortion facility, the skateboarders would have been labeled as meddling trespassers trying to undermine "choice," instead of being hailed as heroes.

To mark this sad anniversary, many of us will join in the *March for Life* in Washington D.C., San Francisco or similar marches in many cities across the country. Many of us will work in our legislatures to expand protection for unborn children, or to prevent abortion-rights activists from enshrining abortion at the state level, because they fear the coming demise of *Roe*. Many of us will serve at our neighborhood pregnancy help centers, maternity homes, prenatal care programs, shelters and food pantries so those in need will know there are alternatives to abortion and many people willing to help. Many of us will speak to our neighbors, classmates, co-workers, relatives and friends about the life and dignity of each human person. Many of us will pray and offer loving assistance outside the doors of abortion facilities, the legally protected "dumpsters" of *Roe v. Wade*. Many Rosaries will be prayed to usher in a springtime of faith and a culture of life.

And our prayers are being heard. There are many signs that our culture continues to grow in a pro-life direction. Those who promote abortion are, with good reason, fearful that *Roe v. Wade* is nearing the end. They fear a massive generation of young people who reject the culture of death. They fear the witness of countless women, men and family members who mourn the loss of their children to abortion. They fear the growing attention to the humanity of unborn children on the Internet, in magazines, news reports and the ultrasound images expectant parents and grandparents forward to friends. And they fear the growing trend to view each child, even those with health problems, as a gift, and not a threat. These "fears" should give us great encouragement. Pro-life prayers and actions are working. Rosaries and skateboards are building a culture of life!

Tom Grenchik is the Executive Director of the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

NOMINATIONS for the Diocese of Worcester's annual Pro-Life Awards will be accepted until February 15th. Nominations are sought for both the Mother Teresa Award (given to an adult) and the Ruth Pakaluk Award (given to a youth) which are presented to individuals who have demonstrated heroic witness to the sanctity of human life. Please contact the Respect Life Office to obtain a copy of the nomination form.

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.

NEW WEBSITE – Coming in February! *Our website is currently under construction and we apologize for any missing information from our pro-life pages in recent weeks due to the change-over. Sometime in February the new site for www.worcesterdiocese.org will be launched. We look forward to bringing you more information on our new and improved site in the weeks ahead!*

A Prayer for Life

Father and maker of all, You adorn all creation with splendor and beauty,
And fashion human lives in Your image and likeness.
Awaken in every heart reverence for the work of Your hands,
and renew among Your people a readiness to nurture and
sustain Your precious gift of life.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever. Amen.



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