

# Respect Life Office

## Diocese of Worcester

### Mission and Goals

The Respect Life Office serves the Church of Worcester by implementing the U.S. Bishops' *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities* in which we are called as Catholics to uphold the dignity of the human person from conception to natural death, and work diligently to proclaim the Gospel of Life through the four-fold areas of prayer, education, pastoral care, and public policy. Among the moral issues at both the beginning and end of life, where people are particularly most vulnerable, and about which the beauty of the Church's teaching needs to be made known are: abortion, post-abortion healing, contraception, reproductive technologies, stem cell research and cloning, physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, end-of-life care and decision-making, religious liberty and conscience rights.

*Affirming the Life and Dignity of the Human Person is one of the priorities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The diocesan Respect Life Office works closely with the USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, other New England Diocesan Pro-Life Offices, and the Massachusetts Catholic Conference and its Pro-Life/Pro-Family and Health Care Subcommittees.*

### Programs and Services

- Implementation of the annual *Respect Life Program*, the primary educational vehicle of the U.S. Bishops on pro-life issues, including distribution to parishes, Catholic schools, and college campus ministries
- Training programs and on-going support for parish pro-life ministries
- E-mail newsletter reaching over 600 subscribers
- Providing monthly Word of Life intercessions and bulletin quotes to parishes
- Diocesan Respect Life Committee
- Providing presentations, training programs, and conferences to parishes and groups on the many life and death issues affecting the culture and Catholic life
- Serving as a resource to clergy and laity on life issues and the Church's moral teaching
- Providing opportunities for healing and reconciliation for women and men wounded by abortion through the ministry of *Project Rachel*
- Referrals and consultations for related pastoral support services
- Coordinating the annual bus trip to Washington, DC for the *March for Life* each January and the January 22 Day of Prayer and Penance
- Coordinating the annual *Mass for Life* (Feast of the Annunciation) for Catholic high school students and the annual Pro-Life Awards
- Implementing the U.S. Bishops' annual *Fortnight for Freedom* observance (June/July) in defense of religious freedom and conscience rights, and its corresponding on-going *Call to Prayer for Life, Marriage, and Religious Liberty*
- Coordinating educational initiatives and programs of action on specific public policy issues as they arise (e.g., the 2012 referendum on Physician-Assisted Suicide and subsequent on-going education on the issue)
- Participation in professional organizations and conferences
- Providing print contributions to local and national publications educating on the life issues
- Exhibit tables providing educational resources at major diocesan conferences