Observing the January 22nd Day of Prayer and Penance

Ideas for personal and communal practices

- Participate in the USCCB’s “Nine Days of Prayer, Penance, and Pilgrimage” from Jan. 21 to 29. Visit www.9daysforlife.com to sign up for daily email messages during the novena, or text “9days” to 55000.

- Hold a “Holy Hour for Life” in your parish or with your parish cluster. Resources can be found here: http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/prayers/holy-hour-for-reparation-and-healing-for-the-anniversary-of-roe-v-wade.cfm (Priests and deacons may obtain a presider’s edition of the Holy Hour by contacting the Respect Life Office at 508-929-4311.)

- Find many more liturgical helps in the USCCB Pro-Life Secretariat’s prayer section which can be found at this link: http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/prolife-prayers.cfm and at www.9daysforlife.com.

- Spend some special time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, or in your home. Pro-life prayers and intercessions can be found at the links above.

- Attend daily Mass and offer it for an end to abortion and an increased respect for human life.

- Pray for those who have been wounded by abortion, that they may experience God’s mercy and healing. Raise awareness of Project Rachel, the Catholic Church’s ministry of healing and reconciliation to those who’ve been wounded by abortion, through your parish bulletin with this announcement:

  Are you or someone you know hurting from a past abortion? Project Rachel can help. Call in strictest confidence: 508-791-HOPE(4673) or visit www.hopeafterabortion.com to learn more.


- Learn more about abortion and many other life issues through the articles in the U.S. Bishops’ annual Respect Life Program at www.usccb.org/respectlife. Duplicate one of the articles and use as an insert in your parish bulletin.

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- Pray for those who minister in service of the dignity of the human person – crisis pregnancy counselors, hospice workers, clergy, pastoral care workers, medical professionals, educators, etc.

- Pray for the conversion of mind and heart of those who support or have been involved in abortion in any way.

- Pray for country’s elected officials that they may enact laws that protect human life from the moment of conception to natural death, respect the constitutional and God-given right to religious freedom, and rights of conscience.

- 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, encouraging more involvement in the USCCB Call to Prayer for Life, Marriage, and Religious Liberty, etc.

- 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). 
  http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp_ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae_en.html

- Plan to attend the Respect Life Mass with Bishop McManus at St. Paul’s Cathedral on Thursday, Jan. 23 at 7:30 p.m. to pray for and with those who will be travelling to Washington, DC to attend the March for Life with hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from around the country on Fri. Jan. 24. (Coverage of the March for Life in Washington, DC will be televised on EWTN and at www.ewtn.com)

- Learn more about pro-life news and events at www.worcesterdiocese.org/respect-life.

- Sign up for our email list by emailing aledoux@worcesterdiocese.org.

- Follow us on Twitter @RespectLifeOfcDoW

“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