

**INSIDE THE  
GUIDE:**

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**HOW TO  
USE**



**HOMILY HELPS**



**INTERCESSIONS  
FOR LIFE**



**SIMPLE  
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**9 DAYS FOR  
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**9 DAYS FOR LIFE  
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**ADOPTION  
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# RESOURCE GUIDE

**2016-17 Respect Life Program**

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**MOVED BY  
MERCY**

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The Respect Life Program, including this resource guide, is meant to help leaders integrate the Church's vision of the human person into their various ministries.

Although suggestions are given for using various elements of the program, innovative use of the materials is encouraged.

For example, although recommended for use on Respect Life Sunday and the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children, the intercessions can be used any time of the year. Similarly, the homily notes could be used as inspiration for a talk by a lay leader.

We would like to know how you use the materials.  
Email us at [prolife@usccb.org](mailto:prolife@usccb.org)!



## HOW TO USE

# SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE 2016-2017 RESPECT LIFE PROGRAM MATERIALS

*These suggestions are meant to provide some ideas for ministry, parish, school, or personal use. Be sure to know and follow all local policies and procedures, particularly safe environment and parental rights policies, and to obtain the appropriate permissions before moving forward. If you have any questions about applicable policies, contact your parish, school, diocese, and/or other relevant authoritative entities.*

### DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly all materials are available to order or download for free\* at [www.usccb.org/respectlife!](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife)

*\*Folder not available for download.*

**Folder:** The folder can be used for more than just holding the 2016-2017 Respect Life Program materials! For example, put a label with customized information for your organization (ministry, parish, school, diocese, etc.) on the right inside pocket, and use the folder to hold participant materials for local conferences, retreats, and gatherings.

**Catalog:** Make others aware of the variety of materials available to order from the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, ranging from prayer cards to posters and more. Because of the wide array available, people serving in various capacities can find helpful resources for their job or ministry. Give them copies of the catalog, or direct them to [www.usccb.org/respectlife](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife), where they can access it online.

**Resource Guide:** The Respect Life Program, and therefore this resource guide, is meant to help leaders integrate the Church's vision of the human person into their various ministries. It is not intended to be prescriptive, nor is it comprehensive. Although suggestions are given for using various elements of the program, **leaders are encouraged to use the materials in innovative ways.**

Additionally, we would be like to know how you creatively put the materials to use in order to continue improving the resources we provide. So please let us know how you use the materials by emailing us at [prolife@usccb.org!](mailto:prolife@usccb.org)

### POSTER:

#### CLERGY

Deliver a homily on the theme, "Moved by Mercy," tying it together with respect for each person and his or her life. Encourage parishioners to take home copies of the image, make a related resolution for the week, and post the image somewhere in their home to remind them of their resolution.

## PARISHES

- Put up the poster in the back of church, on the inside of the front door, and/or in the parish office. Leave it up all year, or put it up during Respect Life Month (October) and January (the month in which the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children occurs).
- Print the poster from [www.usccb.org/respectlife](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife) on 8.5" x 11" paper. Use it as a bulletin insert, or make copies available for parishioners to take home.

## RESPECT LIFE MINISTRY

Hold a contest or raffle (following local laws and policies regarding such events). Place a receptacle, entry forms, and an explanatory sign beneath the poster during the month of October. Other than contact information, require that each entry include a concrete suggestion\* for cherishing the gift of human life. The winning entry/entries could be drawn at random, or a prize could be given for the best idea(s)—for example, printing them in the parish bulletin and implementing them.

*\*Example: Parishioners could sign an oversized card made out of poster board with a specific prayer commitment for women facing unexpected pregnancies; the card could then be given to a local pregnancy care center.*

## FAITH FORMATION

Print the poster from [www.usccb.org/respectlife](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife), make copies and hand them out to participants in faith formation programs. Incorporate the message of “Moved by Mercy,” as it pertains to respect for each person’s life, into regular programming.

## CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Hang the poster in the classroom. Explain the theme within the context of respecting each other’s God-given dignity, which nothing can take away, and the consequential importance of cherishing each person’s life.

Provide a sticky note to each student, and instruct them to each write down an example of living out mercy in a way that respects others’ dignity. (Give examples from the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.)

Post their ideas next to the poster, and invite the students to take down a sticky note (not their own), do the action, and write a one-paragraph reflection on the experience for extra credit.

## YOUTH MINISTRY

Hang the poster in the meeting space, and plan an event based on the message of “Moved by Mercy” within the context of life issues. Highlight ways in which the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy can help us cherish the gift of every person’s life. (This would be a natural follow-up to the experience of World Youth Day, but need not be limited to such events.)

## YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Coordinate a service event based on the message of “Moved by Mercy” within the context of life issues. Ask a few of the young adults who attend to speak about their experiences in light of the theme at a regularly scheduled upcoming event, or hold an event specifically for this purpose.

## ARTICLES:

### CLERGY

- Incorporate points from the articles into homilies throughout the year, and coordinate with parish staff to make the relevant article or other information available for parishioners at that time.

For example, in a homily on mercy, mention that help is available for those who suffer after abortion, include the web address [www.hopeafterabortion.org](http://www.hopeafterabortion.org) in that week’s bulletin, and refer to it in the homily or announcements.

Or in a homily on love for neighbor, refer to articles such as “Caring for Loved One’s at Life’s End” and “Accompanying Expectant Mothers Considering Adoption,” which offer concrete suggestions.

- Feature a new article each month in the literature rack. The week the new article is available, alert the congregation in the pulpit announcements and incorporate it into the weekly homily or bulletin reflection from the pastor.

### PARISHES

Feature a different article each month. Include a quote with a link to the full article in the bulletin, highlight and link to the article on the parish website, and share the article on social media.\*

*\*See also: Free social media training webinar. (<http://goo.gl/xfjhNe>). Although this one-hour webinar took place during the 2015-2016 Respect Life Program, the principles covered remain pertinent, and continued use of the shareable graphics is encouraged.*

## RESPECT LIFE MINISTRY

Distribute the articles (in print or online) among other participants in Respect Life ministry to read by a certain time. Schedule a casual get-together with light refreshments or at a local café or restaurant. Discuss the articles and what was most helpful. Together, brainstorm ideas for how to use the articles as tools for reaching others compassionately with the merciful message of respect for life.

## FAITH FORMATION

Incorporate the articles into regular programming, and make parishioners and fellow religious educators aware of them as resources.

## CATHOLIC EDUCATION

- Bring the articles (and Simple Supplements) to the attention of school counselors, teachers, and other professional staff. Make school counselors, teachers, and other professional staff aware of the articles as reference resources.
- Incorporate information from the articles into classroom curriculums.

## YOUTH MINISTRY

Split the young people into small groups. Give each group an age-appropriate article to read and discuss. Have each group present a summary of the article and the fruits of their discussion (based on reflection questions written by the youth minister ahead of time). Provide markers and easel pads, and give extra points if the teens are able to tastefully and respectfully incorporate hand-drawn renditions of emojis\* into their presentations.

*\*Emoji: Small image typically used in text messages or online media to convey emotion, action, or other meaning.*

## YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Use the articles as inspiration for the structure of presentations or simply as reference.

## REFLECTION FLYER:

### CLERGY

- Use the reflection (in whole or in part) in the pastor's reflection in the bulletin.
- Use as inspiration for a homily.

## PARISH

- Use as a bulletin insert.
- Hang the flyer up on parish doors, bulletin boards, and other high-traffic areas.

## RESPECT LIFE MINISTRY

Gather with other members of Respect Life ministry to reflect upon the theme together—both for personal enrichment and to consider the ministry's activities in light of the theme for the year.

## FAITH FORMATION

Incorporate the reflection into regular programming to highlight the Church's vision of the human person and how it relates to our daily lives. It may be helpful to draw upon the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy\* for examples relevant both to individual life and to life as a member of the Church, the Body of Christ.

*\*Listed in section of resource guide entitled "Simple Supplements."*

## CATHOLIC EDUCATION

- Use as a reflection before beginning class.
- Assign students to read the flyer and then write a brief reflection of their own.

## YOUTH MINISTRY

Use the reflection as inspiration for a special talk or event during October and/or January.

## YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

- Send the reflection out in e-newsletters, and share on social media.
- Use as a reflection before regularly scheduled events, especially during the months of October (Respect Life Month) and January (the month of the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children).
- Use the reflection as inspiration for a special talk or event during October and/or January.



HOMILY HELPS

# HOMILY HELPS: MOVED BY MERCY RESPECT LIFE MONTH



WE ARE  
CALLED  
TO SHOW  
MERCY  
BECAUSE  
MERCY HAS  
FIRST BEEN  
SHOWN TO  
US.

POPE FRANCIS

The Respect Life Program, sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, started in 1972 and begins anew each October—the month set aside by the U.S. bishops as “Respect Life Month.”

The program promotes respect for human life in light of our intrinsic dignity as having been created in God’s image and likeness and called to an eternal destiny with him.

New materials are designed each year to assist those in various roles within the Church to help Catholics understand, value, and become engaged with supporting the dignity of every person, especially by cherishing God’s gift of life.

Download or order materials at [www.usccb.org/respectlife!](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife!)

## SUGGESTED OBSERVANCE:

Respect Life Sunday, October 2, 2016  
Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4  
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9  
Second Reading: 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14  
Gospel Acclamation: 1 Peter 1:25  
Gospel: Luke 17:5-10

## I. Our Troubled World

A. In today’s First Reading, we hear a voice crying out to God with questions many of us can relate to: “How long, O LORD? I cry for help but you do not listen! ...Why do you let me see ruin; why must I look at misery?” We see and experience suffering in our own lives and in the world.

- **Example A:** In 2015, 48% of those who died under Oregon’s assisted suicide law cited being a “burden” on family, friends, or caregivers as a reason for their suicide.<sup>1</sup>
- **Example B:** “We often assume parenthood happens easily after ‘I do,’ but for many married couples, it does not. For some, the joy of conception never happens. Others suffer repeated miscarriages” or secondary infertility.<sup>2</sup>
- **Example C:** [Give examples from relevant news headlines.]

B. Sin also causes suffering. God creates us in his image and likeness and calls us to union with him now and for eternity. When we sin against others, we are treating them contrary to their God-given dignity and are also acting against our own nature.

## II. Reason for Hope

- A. We have all sinned against each other. But God expresses his love for each of us through his limitless mercy, revealed in Jesus' death on the Cross.
- B. His mercy does not mean indifferently overlooking our sins, leaving us in our sinful ways and the misery they bear. Rather, he offers mercy that we must actively choose to receive by repenting and resolving to amend our lives.
- C. Though unworthy, we are shown forgiveness and love by God himself. This love moves our hearts with gratitude and joy.

## III. Agents of Mercy

- A. Receiving God's mercy helps us draw closer to him and become more like him.
- B. Christ asks us to be his hands and feet in a world filled with pain and suffering, tragedy and injustice.
- C. We will face challenges, but the Lord equips those whom he calls. The Second Reading reminds us that "God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love... So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord... but bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God" (2 Timothy 1:6-8).
- D. The Lord has also given us a roadmap—the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy—noting, "whatever you [do] for one of these least brothers of mine, you [do] for me" (Matthew 25:40). During his visit to the U.S., Pope Francis reiterated this, saying, "your care for one another is care for Jesus himself."<sup>3</sup>

### EXAMPLES

*(The Works of Mercy and other quick reference information is provided in the section of this resource guide entitled "Simple Supplements.")*

- **Example A:** Tens of millions of lives in this nation have been directly touched by abortion. If a friend shares a previous abortion experience, express your sympathy for their loss.

If they seem to need help, assure them of God's unconditional love, and encourage them to seek healing and peace. Explain that the Church's Project Rachel Ministry for post-abortion healing can help, and refer them to [www.HopeAfterAbortion.org](http://www.HopeAfterAbortion.org).

- **Example B:** In a society that emphasizes productivity, pleasure, and independence, it is all the more important to accompany those nearing the end of life. We need to remind them they are not alone, they are loved, and the value of their lives is not dependent upon anything transient.
- **Example C:** "Our distorted relationship with God has infected our relationship with the earth, evidenced by pollution, lack of clean water, toxic waste, and immense material waste. ... What the Holy Father often calls a 'culture of waste' or a 'throwaway culture' even goes so far as to see and treat human life as disposable."<sup>4</sup>

We need to cultivate within ourselves "an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness, which is capable of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next."<sup>5</sup> With this attitude, as we draw closer to God and to each other, we will become more attuned to God's call.

<sup>1</sup> USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, Fact Sheet, "Assisted Suicide Laws in Oregon and Washington: What Safeguards?" [www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/assisted-suicide/to-live-each-day/upload/Oregon-and-Washing-euthanasia-2013.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/assisted-suicide/to-live-each-day/upload/Oregon-and-Washing-euthanasia-2013.pdf), accessed April 15, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, *Seven Considerations While Navigating Infertility*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis, *Greeting to the Organizers, Volunteers and Benefactors of the World Meeting of Families*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, *Serene Attentiveness to God's Creation*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), no. 226.

Excerpts from *Misericordiae vultus* © 2015, *Greeting* © 2015, and *Laudato Si'* © 2015, Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Used with permission. All rights reserved. Scriptural excerpts from NABRE © 2010 CCD. Used with permission. Copyright © 2016, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC. All rights reserved. [www.usccb.org/respectlife](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife)



INTERCESSIONS

# INTERCESSIONS FOR LIFE

OCTOBER 2, 2016:  
RESPECT LIFE SUNDAY

For all Catholics:  
May we be channels of God's mercy  
by loving each person  
and celebrating the gift of his or her life;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For women and men suffering after abortion:  
May the Church's post-abortion  
healing ministry  
help them find peace  
through God's limitless mercy;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For those nearing the end of life:  
May God strengthen their faith  
and comfort them  
through others' loving support;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For those doubting their own worth:  
May they find lasting reassurance  
in the truth of God's love for them;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For those longing for a child of their own:  
May they find comfort  
in the assurance of God's loving plan;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For parents placing their children  
for adoption:  
May they encounter the outstretched hands  
of the Father's love  
through our words and actions;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For the criminal justice system:  
May it be rooted in mercy and healing  
and affirm the sacredness  
of each person's life;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For those diagnosed with a terminal illness:  
May each hour of their lives be cherished  
with care that honors God's gift of life;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For all people:  
May the Lord soften our hearts  
with compassion,  
that we may treat each person  
with respect that affirms  
the gift of his or her life;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

JANUARY 22, 2017:  
DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE LEGAL  
PROTECTION OF UNBORN CHILDREN

For unborn children:  
May they be lovingly welcomed  
into this world by family, friends,  
and the local community;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For expectant mothers whose hearts  
are troubled:  
May they receive helpful, loving support  
for themselves and their babies;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For those grieving after abortion:  
May they know God's limitless mercy  
and seek help through the Church's  
post-abortion healing ministry;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For expectant mothers  
placing their children for adoption:  
May they receive loving support  
as they walk this journey;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For those working in post-abortion  
healing ministries:  
May God's mercy radiate through them  
as they provide love and support  
to those grieving after abortion;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For families whose unborn child  
is not expected to live long:  
May they find strength and peace  
in the support of others;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For medical professionals  
who work against human life:  
May they find renewed reverence  
for God's gift of life  
and treat all people with life-affirming respect;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For all couples facing unexpected pregnancies:  
May the Lord give them peace, hope,  
and love for their child and each other;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For those who are working to build a culture  
that welcomes and respects all human life:  
May God help them bring his love and mercy  
to those in need;  
*We pray to the Lord:*



MAY EXPECTANT  
MOTHERS  
RECEIVE LOVING  
SUPPORT.





# SIMPLE SUPPLEMENTS

## WHAT IS THIS?

The following references are provided to supplement each of the new 2016-2017 Respect Life Program articles. Suggestions are provided for using this section, but its use is not limited to the following.

**Examples: Individuals can use this section to discover where to learn more about a given topic. Clergy can refer to this section for ideas on weaving the message of mercy as related to respect for human life into their homilies. Teachers can pull personal quotes, stories, information, and references from this section to incorporate into lesson plans that naturally relate to human dignity, and consequently the respect due to each person's life.**

## HOW DO I ORDER THE USCCB RESOURCES?

Use the order form in the back of the catalog available at [www.usccb.org/respectlife](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife), or call toll-free 866-582-0943.

## CORPORAL AND SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

**Corporal:** The Corporal Works of Mercy are found in the teachings of Jesus (Matthew 25:31-46) and give us a model for how we should treat all others, as if they were Christ in disguise. They “are charitable actions by which we help our neighbors in their bodily needs.”<sup>1</sup> They respond to the basic needs of humanity as we journey together through this life.

Feed the hungry  
Give drink to the thirsty  
Shelter the homeless  
Visit the sick  
Visit the prisoners  
Bury the dead  
Give alms to the poor

**Spiritual:** The Spiritual Works of Mercy have long been a part of the Christian tradition, appearing in the works of theologians and spiritual writers throughout history. Just as Jesus attended to the spiritual well-being of those he ministered to, these Spiritual Works of Mercy guide us to “help our neighbor in their spiritual needs.”<sup>2</sup>

Counseling the doubtful  
Instructing the ignorant  
Admonishing the sinner  
Comforting the sorrowful  
Forgiving injuries  
Bearing wrongs patiently  
Praying for the living and the dead

<sup>1</sup> USCCB, *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington D.C., 2006) 508.

<sup>2</sup> USCCB, *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington D.C., 2006) 557.



# BRIDGES OF MERCY FOR POST-ABORTION HEALING

## SCRIPTURE

Ps 103:10-17 | Jeremiah 31:15-17 | Matthew 5:7 | Mark 2:1-12 | Luke 7:36-50 | Luke 15:4-7 | John 4:4-29 | John 8:2-11 | John 14:27

## CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

211, 1464-65, 1468-1470, 1846-1848

## FROM THE POPES

- Pope St. John Paul II. *Evangelium vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*) (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995). 99.
- Pope St. John Paul II. Homily, Mass for the Canonization of Sr. Maria Faustina Kowalska, April 30, 2000. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000). 6-7.
- Pope Francis. *Evangelii gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*) (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013). 113.
- Pope Francis. *Misericordiae vultus* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015). 3 (second paragraph).

## USCCB RESOURCES

- **www.HopeAfterAbortion.org**  
Healing stories, letters, prayers, and local ministry contact information for the Church's Project Rachel Ministry for post-abortion healing.

- **Project Rachel: Peace Starts Here**  
8-panel brochure. Item #1016.  
Spanish Item #1017.
- **How to Talk to a Friend Who's Had an Abortion**  
6-panel brochure. Item #0120.  
Spanish Item #0121.
- **Healing within Marriage from an Abortion**  
8-panel brochure. Item #1441.  
Spanish Item #1451.
- **The Hollow Men: Male Grief & Trauma Following Abortion**  
8-panel brochure. Item #0846.
- **Trust in God's Mercy (prayer card)**  
Prayer card. Item #9913. Spanish Item #9914.

## SAINTS

- **St. Maria Faustina Kowalska:** "In the 1930s, Jesus chose a humble Polish nun, St. Maria Faustina Kowalska, to receive private revelations concerning Divine Mercy that were recorded in her Diary."<sup>3</sup>
- **Pope St. John Paul II,** among many other encyclicals, wrote *Dives in Misericordia* (*Rich in Mercy*) and *Evangelium vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*). He also canonized St. Faustina, stating in the homily of the Mass for her canonization that the Second Sunday of Easter, from then on, "will be called 'Divine Mercy Sunday'."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, "Divine Mercy Sunday" *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*, <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/prayers/divine-mercy-sunday.cfm> (accessed June 10, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Pope John Paul II, "Homily of the Holy Father: Mass in the St. Peter's Square for the Canonization of Sr. Mary Faustina Kowalska", The Holy See, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2000/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_20000430\\_faustina.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2000/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_20000430_faustina.html) (Accessed June 10, 2016)



# FORGIVENESS BECAME A REALITY FOR ME.



## REAL PEOPLE, REAL LIFE:

“After my abortion I was broken and desperate for help. I turned to Project Rachel. After the experience, I left feeling like a whole person again. Forgiveness became a reality for me, a feeling I never imagined was possible.”<sup>5</sup>

“As the father of an aborted baby I felt not only loss but failure. Through Project Rachel I was able to regain a sense of self-worth and return to my faith.”<sup>6</sup>

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Many times the people who have participated in an abortion are not even aware of the countless ways it is affecting their lives.

A range of reactions following abortion can include guilt, anger, discomfort with children, low self-worth, depression, grief, increased alcohol use, inability to communicate, and feeling suicidal.

Many avoid people, places or things that trigger traumatic memories of their abortion experience.

Some experience flashbacks of the abortion and dreams of the unborn child, or intense distress on the anniversary dates of the abortion or the child’s projected due date.

- “Women with a history of abortion have higher rates of anxiety (34% higher), depression (37%), alcohol use/misuse (110%) ... and suicidal behavior (155%), compared to those who have not had an abortion.”<sup>7</sup>
- “Male responses to a partner’s abortion include grief, guilt, depression, anxiety, feelings of repressed emotions, helplessness/voicelessness/powerlessness, post-traumatic stress, anger and relationship problems.”<sup>8</sup>

## INTERCESSIONS

For those suffering after abortion:  
May they know God’s limitless mercy  
and seek help through the Church’s  
post-abortion healing ministry;  
We pray to the Lord:

## RELATED WORKS OF MERCY

Comfort the sorrowful.  
Counsel the doubtful.  
Instruct the ignorant.  
Bury the dead.  
Forgive injuries.  
Pray for the living and the dead.

<sup>5</sup> Project Rachel Ministry, *Peace Starts Here* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Project Rachel Ministry, *Peace Starts Here* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> PK Coleman, “Abortion and Mental Health: Quantitative Synthesis and Analysis of Research Published 1995-2009,” *British Journal of Psychiatry*, Aug. 2011; 199:180-186. <http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/199/3/180.full-text.pdf+html>

<sup>8</sup> C.T. Coyle, “Men and Abortion: A Review of Empirical Reports Concerning the Impact of Abortion on Men,” *The Internet Journal of Mental Health*, 3, no. 2, (2007): <http://rupetacerea.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/eMen-and-Abortion.pdf>.



# CARING FOR LOVED ONES AT LIFE'S END

## SCRIPTURE

Psalms 33:20-22 | Isaiah 41:10 | Romans 8:18, 38-39 | Romans 12:15 | 2 Corinthians 4:16-17 | Galatians 6:2 | Philippians 1:20-21 | James 5:13-15

## CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

1004-1014, 1499-1525, 2276-2283

## FROM THE POPES

- Pope St. John Paul II. Apostolic Letter *Salvifici doloris (On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering)*. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1984). 28-30.
- Pope St. John Paul II. *Evangelium vitae (The Gospel of Life)*. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995). 46-47 and 65.
- Pope Francis. Address to Participants in the Plenary of the Pontifical Academy for Life. March 5, 2015. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015).
- Pope Francis. *Amoris laetitia (The Joy of Love)*. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016). 48.

## USCCB RESOURCES

- **Maggie's Story: Living Like Dad**  
8-panel brochure. Item #1543.  
Spanish Item #1553.

- **Advance Medical Directives: Planning for Your Future**

8-panel brochure. Item #1446.  
Spanish Item #1456.

- **Caring for Each Other, Even Unto Death**

8-panel brochure. Item #1042.  
Spanish Item #1052.

- **To Live Each Day with Dignity**

[www.usccb.org/ToLiveEachDay](http://www.usccb.org/ToLiveEachDay)

- **To Live Each Day with Dignity: A Statement on Physician-Assisted Suicide**

15 pp. Item #1172.

- **Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services**

Booklet. 40 pages. Item #0970.

- **John Paul II: Dying with Dignity**

4 pp. Item #0542.

## RELATED SAINTS

- **Our Lady of Lourdes:** Patron saint of bodily ills. St. John Paul II celebrated the first *World Day of the Sick*, declaring that it would be celebrated each year on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. In the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, one of the titles by which Our Lady is referred to is "Comfort of the afflicted."
- **St. Joseph, Husband of Mary:** Patron saint of a happy, holy death. Those who are dying have been entrusted to St. Joseph, "since pious tradition holds that he was assisted by Mary and Jesus in his last agony."<sup>9</sup>



## REAL PEOPLE, REAL LIFE:

In “Maggie’s Story: Living Like Dad,” Maggie reflected upon accompanying her father in his final days as she faced her own terminal illness years later.

- “Watching anyone suffer, especially a loved one, is one of the hardest human experiences. ... Looking back, I’m convinced that walking through those moments with Dad made both of us different and better people. God loved us enough to allow those moments—even and especially moments of suffering—in order to teach us lessons which helped us to grow spiritually and emotionally. Dad left a legacy. He taught me how to live and die with faith and with dignity marked by patience and grace. He taught me that dignity can’t be diminished by pain or loss of personal control. Regardless of our circumstances and whether people acknowledge it, nothing and no one can take away our God-given dignity.”<sup>10</sup>
- “At first it was awkward trying to converse with a father I only knew as ‘Dad,’ the guy who loaned me

the car keys in high school and made sure I could balance my checkbook in college. But eventually, the conversation turned to life’s more significant topics. This was new, but refreshing, and it soon became a time that our family cherished. I learned more about my dad in those last five months than I had ever known. At one point he even remarked how great it was to have the time to just talk together.”<sup>11</sup>

## DID YOU KNOW?

- The worst suffering of seriously ill people “is often not physical pain, which can be alleviated with competent medical care, but feelings of isolation and hopelessness.”<sup>12</sup>
- “Hospice care focuses on alleviating pain and other symptoms, meeting basic needs, and providing comfort.”<sup>13</sup>

## INTERCESSIONS

For those nearing the end of life:  
May God strengthen their faith and  
give them comfort and hope  
through the gentle compassion of their caregivers;  
We pray to the Lord:

For those diagnosed with a terminal illness:  
May each hour of their lives be cherished  
with care that honors God’s gift of life;  
We pray to the Lord:

## RELATED WORKS OF MERCY

Visit the sick.  
Feed the hungry.  
Give drink to the thirsty.  
Counsel the doubtful.  
Instruct the ignorant.  
Comfort the sorrowful.  
Forgive injuries.  
Pray for the living and the dead.

<sup>9</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, “Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines”, *The Holy See*, [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccdds\\_doc\\_20020513\\_vers-direttorio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20020513_vers-direttorio_en.html) (accessed June 10, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, *Maggie’s Story: Living Like Dad* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, *Maggie’s Story: Living Like Dad* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> USCCB, *To Live Each Day with Dignity: A Statement on Physician-Assisted Suicide* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishop, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, *Caring for Loved Ones at Life’s End* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2016).



# EVERY SUICIDE IS TRAGIC

## SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:27 | Deuteronomy 30:19-20, 31:6 | Psalm 34:18-19; Psalm 143:11 | Jeremiah 29:11-12 | Isaiah 66:13 | Galatians 6:2 | Romans 12:15

## CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

1004; 2276-2283; 2447-2448

## FROM THE POPES

- Pope St. John Paul II. *Evangelium vitae (The Gospel of Life)*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995. 47, 64-67.
- Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *Declaration on Euthanasia*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 1980.

## USCCB RESOURCES

- **To Live Each Day with Dignity**  
[www.usccb.org/ToLiveEachDay](http://www.usccb.org/ToLiveEachDay)
- **To Live Each Day with Dignity: A Statement on Physician-Assisted Suicide**  
Booklet. 15 pp. Item #1172.
- **Killing the Pain, Not the Patient: Palliative Care vs. Assisted Suicide**  
Available online only. (Listed under “Select Educational Articles” on [www.usccb.org/ToLiveEachDay](http://www.usccb.org/ToLiveEachDay))
- **Life Matters: Doctor-Assisted Death by Suicide**  
8-panel brochure. Item #1243.  
Spanish Item #1253.
- **Assisted Suicide Laws in Oregon and Washington: What Safeguards?**  
Fact sheet. Available online only. (Listed under “Fact Sheets” on [www.usccb.org/ToLiveEachDay](http://www.usccb.org/ToLiveEachDay))

## USCCB VIDEO RESOURCES

View at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/assisted-suicide/to-live-each-day/assisted-suicide-videos.cfm>

- **Luke’s Story: Every Suicide is Tragic**  
Luke Maxwell, 19, survived an attempt to take his own life, and reminds us that every life is worth living. You don’t discourage suicide by assisting suicide.
- **John’s Story: Beyond Independence**  
Born without arms, John Foppe speaks to a way of life beyond independence, namely inter-dependence.
- **Maggie’s Story**  
Maggie was diagnosed with brain cancer and strongly opposed assisted suicide. Although she passed away peacefully in 2015, her powerful story continues to inspire hope and courage.
- **Jeanette’s Story: 15 Years Later**  
When Oregon resident, Jeanette Hall, had less than a year to live, she asked her cancer doctor for the pills to commit suicide. Dr. Kenneth Stevens got to know her better, and inspired her to consider treatment. Now, 15 years later, Jeanette says, “It’s great to be alive!”

## SAINTS

- **St. Francis of Assisi:** Patron saint of peace
- **St. Jude Thaddeus:** Patron saint of impossible causes
- **St. John of God:** Patron saint of those who are sick

## REAL PEOPLE, REAL LIFE:

- “Barbara had been in remission from her lung cancer. When it recurred, her oncologist wanted her to be given a drug that (statistically) would increase the chance of her being alive in one year



TRUE COMPASSION ALLEVIATES SUFFERING WHILE MAINTAINING SOLIDARITY WITH THOSE WHO SUFFER. IT DOES NOT PUT LETHAL DRUGS IN THEIR HANDS AND ABANDON THEM TO THEIR SUICIDAL IMPULSES.



by 45%. The State of Oregon denied this treatment stating that her prognosis wasn't good enough to warrant expensive medication to treat her cancer. Yet, in the same letter denying coverage for her medication, the State offered full coverage (100%) for her assisted suicide."<sup>14</sup>

- Luke Maxwell, 19, survived an attempt to take his own life. He shares, "When someone is standing...on the edge, ready to jump, what's the natural human response? It's to pull them back. With assisted suicide, the message is 'go ahead, jump.' ...Every suicide is tragic—whether you're old or young, healthy or sick, your life is precious where you are and is worth living."<sup>15</sup>
- Born without arms, John Foppe speaks to a way of life beyond independence, namely interdependence:

"We live in a world [in which], all too often, our self-worth is bound up in what we can *do*. ... As a disabled person, I've been very tuned into this whole idea of independence: 'I don't need anybody's help'...And yeah, I get that on a certain level. But nobody's totally ever completely independent. None of us live on an island. We need each other.

...Everybody has *something* in their life. And some of those conditions make us feel broken or incomplete... But a life also yields a lot of joy, a lot of opportunity to give and to be generous and to love and to be loved. And you only do that by having the courage to step into life."<sup>16</sup>

### DID YOU KNOW?

- "When a patient says *I want to die*, it may simply mean *I feel useless*. When a patient says *I don't want to be a burden*, it may really be a question, *Am I a burden?* When a patient says *I've lived a long life already*, she may really be saying *I'm tired. I'm afraid I can't keep going*. And finally, when a patient says *I might as well be dead*, he may really be saying *No one cares about me*. Many studies show that assisted suicide requests are almost always for such psychological or social reasons."<sup>17</sup>
- The root meaning of the word "compassion" "is to 'suffer with' another person. True compassion alleviates suffering while maintaining solidarity with those who suffer. It does not put lethal drugs in their hands and abandon them to their suicidal impulses."<sup>18</sup>

### INTERCESSIONS

For those who struggle to find meaning in their lives: May they find hope and reassurance in Christ through the loving support of friends and family; We pray to the Lord:

### RELATED WORKS OF MERCY

- Visit the sick.
- Feed the hungry.
- Give drink to the thirsty.
- Counsel the doubtful.
- Comfort the sorrowful.
- Pray for the living and the dead.

<sup>14</sup> William L, Toffler, MD, *Life Matters: Doctor-Assisted Death by Suicide*. (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Patients Rights Action Fund, "Luke's Story", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iik3B0Cofc0> (accessed June 10, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Patients Rights Action Fund, "John's Story: Beyond Independence", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uY2VQgUzPs0> (accessed June 10, 2016).

<sup>17</sup> William L, Toffler, MD, *Life Matters: Doctor-Assisted Death by Suicide*. (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2012).

<sup>18</sup> USCCB, *To Live Each Day with Dignity: A Statement on Physician-Assisted Suicide* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishop, 2011).



# SEVEN CONSIDERATIONS WHILE NAVIGATING INFERTILITY

## SCRIPTURE

Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-8, 25:21 | Judges 13:2-24 | 1 Samuel 1:1-2:11, 18-21 | Psalm 34:19 | Psalm 61:2-5 | Isaiah 55:8-9 | Luke 1:5-25, 36-37 | Romans 12:12-13, 15

## CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

2374-2379

## COMPENDIUM OF THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

499-501

## FROM THE POPES

- Pope St. John Paul II. Homily, Mass for the Families, February 13, 1982. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1982. No. 3 (third paragraph).
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *Donum vitae (Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation)*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1987. II. Interventions upon Human Procreation, §B, No. 8.

- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Instruction *Dignitas personae (The Dignity of a Person)*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2008. Nos. 12-23, 28-30.

## USCCB RESOURCES

- **Supporting Friends Navigating Infertility**  
Suggestions available online only. Access via hyperlink listed at [www.usccb.org/respectlife](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife).
- **Webpages:**
  - Infertility: <http://goo.gl/uyH587><sup>19</sup>
  - Reproductive Technology: <http://goo.gl/ErZv4b><sup>20</sup>
  - Natural Family Planning: [www.usccb.org/nfp](http://www.usccb.org/nfp)
  - For Your Marriage: [www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org)
- **Begotten not Made: A Catholic View of Reproductive Technology**  
Article, available online only. <http://goo.gl/9xCN53><sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> “Infertility,” [www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/resources/infertility.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/resources/infertility.cfm) (accessed June 10, 2016).  
<sup>20</sup> “Reproductive Technology,” [www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/reproductive-technology/index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/reproductive-technology/index.cfm) (accessed June 10, 2016).  
<sup>21</sup> John M. Haas, Ph.D., S.T.L., “Begotten Not Made: A Catholic View of Reproductive Technology”, *USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities*, 1998, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/reproductive-technology/begotten-not-made-a-catholic-view-of-reproductive-technology.cfm> (accessed June 10, 2016).

- **Reproductive Technology (Evaluation & Treatment of Infertility): Guidelines for Catholic Couples**

Available online only. Listed on <http://goo.gl/uyH587> under “Resources for Catholic Couples.”

- **Life-Giving Love in an Age of Technology**

Teaching document from the U.S. bishops. 20 pp. Item #1070.

### SAINTS

- **Sts. Joachim and Anne:** “Tradition holds that these saints struggled with infertility and were childless for decades.”<sup>22</sup>
- **St. Rita of Cascia:** Patron saint of infertility

### REAL PEOPLE, REAL LIFE

“We felt so hopeless at times. Words can’t even explain this experience of loss. Fortunately, our marriage only grew stronger, because we were there for each other and continued to rely on God.”<sup>23</sup>

“As I became more educated on what IVF entails, I realized the wisdom and beauty of the Church’s teaching in upholding my dignity as a woman and in safeguarding my personal health.”<sup>24</sup>

### DID YOU KNOW?

- There are medical options for addressing infertility that follow Church teaching and have rates of pregnancy that are statistically significantly higher than *in vitro* fertilization (IVF).<sup>25</sup>

### INTERCESSIONS

For married couples experiencing difficulty conceiving a child:  
May they find solace in the compassionate sensitivity of others;  
We pray to the Lord:

For those longing for a child of their own:  
May they find consolation in God’s tender care, and peace in the assurance of his loving plan;  
We pray to the Lord:

For those whose hearts ache for a child of their own:  
May they experience the Lord’s presence and be filled with his peace;  
We pray to the Lord:

### RELATED WORKS OF MERCY

Comfort the sorrowful.  
Instruct the ignorant.  
Counsel the doubtful.  
Pray for the living and the dead.



<sup>22</sup> “Married Saints: St. Joachim & St. Anne,” <http://www.marriageuniqueforareason.org/2012/07/26/married-saints-st-joachim-st-anne/> (accessed June 10, 2016).

<sup>23</sup> USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, *Adoption Love Story* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> USCCB Secretariat of Pro-life Activities, *Life-giving Love in an Age of Technology* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction, “Infertility”, *NaProTechnology.com*, <http://www.naprotechnology.com/infertility.htm> (Accessed April 15, 2016).



# SERENE ATTENTIVENESS TO GOD'S CREATION

## SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:26, 28 | Genesis 2:15 | Exodus 23:11-12 | Leviticus 25:23

## CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

337-349, 356-358, 2042, 2175-2178, 2415-2418

## FROM THE POPES

- Pope Paul VI. Apostolic Letter. *Octogesima Adveniens* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1971). 21.
- Pope St. John Paul II. "Message for the 1990 World Day of Peace: Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation." (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1990).
- Pope Benedict XVI. *Caritas in veritate (Charity in Truth)*. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009). 51.
- Pope Benedict XVI, *Address to the German Bundestag*, Berlin (September 22, 2011). (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2011). 668.
- Pope Francis, *Laudato si' (On Care for our Common Home)*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015.

## USCCB RESOURCES

- **Webpage: Environmental Justice Program**  
[www.usccb.org/environment](http://www.usccb.org/environment)

## • Pope Francis's New Encyclical

Blog post by Kim Daniels on *To Go Forth*.  
<https://togoforth.org/2015/06/18/pope-francis-new-encyclical/>

## • Caring for God's Creation: Resources for Liturgy, Preaching, and Taking Action

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/ecology-resource-all.pdf>

## SAINTS

- **St. Francis of Assisi:** Patron of animals and ecology
- **St. Kateri Tekakwitha:** Patron of ecology and the environment
- **Blessed Pope Paul VI:** Wrote Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens*, in which he referred to ecological concern.

## REAL PEOPLE, REAL LIFE

"Drawing extensively from the teaching of his predecessors, the Pope teaches that care for the things of the earth is necessarily bound together with our care of one another, especially the poor. This interdependency extends from the deep respect due every human person to all living beings and to the earth where we make our home."<sup>26</sup>

*Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, President  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

<sup>26</sup> Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, Statement on the Occasion of the Promulgation of *Laudato Si'*, 2015. <http://www.usccb.org/news/2015/15-094.cfm> (accessed June 21, 2016).

“In linking respect for human life and dignity with care for the natural world, Pope Francis follows in the footsteps of both Pope Benedict XVI and St. John Paul II, who noted that ‘respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation, which is called to join man in praising God.’”<sup>27</sup>

*Kim Daniels, former spokesperson for the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

- “Instead of resolving the problems of the poor and thinking of how the world can be different, some can only propose a reduction in the birth rate. At times, developing countries face forms of international pressure which make economic assistance contingent on certain policies of ‘reproductive health.’”<sup>28</sup>
- “Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society.”<sup>29</sup>
- “It is troubling that, when some ecological movements defend the integrity of the environment, rightly demanding that certain limits be imposed on scientific research, they sometimes fail to apply those same principles to human life. There is a tendency to justify transgressing all boundaries when experimentation is carried out on living human embryos. We forget that the inalienable worth of a human being transcends his or her degree of development.”<sup>30</sup>

## INTERCESSIONS

May God grant us the grace  
to respect and care for his creation,  
especially those who are most vulnerable;  
We pray to the Lord:

May our hearts be filled  
with tenderness, compassion, and concern  
for our fellow human beings,  
and may we be moved to act upon

sincere love of neighbor;  
We pray to the Lord:

## RELATED WORKS OF MERCY

Give alms to the poor  
Instruct the ignorant  
Feed the hungry  
Give drink to the thirsty  
Shelter the homeless  
Admonish the sinner  
Forgive injuries  
Pray for the living and the dead



<sup>27</sup> Kim Daniels, “Pope Francis’ New Encyclical”, 2015. <https://togoforth.org/2015/06/18/pope-francis-new-encyclical/> (accessed June 21, 2016).

<sup>28</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), no. 50.

<sup>29</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), no. 91.

<sup>30</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), no. 136.



# ACCOMPANYING EXPECTANT MOTHERS CONSIDERING ADOPTION

## SCRIPTURE

Exodus 1:22-2:10 | Esther 2:7 | Matthew 1:18-25 | Matthew 12:50 | Matthew 18:5 | Matthew 19:13-15 | John 14:18 | John 18:25-27 | Acts 7:20-21 | Romans 8:14-17 | Romans 8:23 | Ephesians 1:5 | James 1:27

## FROM THE POPES

- Pope St. John Paul II. “Address to the Meeting of the Adoptive Families Organized by the Missionaries of Charity.” September 5, 2000. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000.

## USCCB RESOURCES

- **Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan.** Pastoral Letter. (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2009), § “Gratitude.”
- **Homily, Cardinal Séan P. O’Malley, OFM Cap.** “Opening Mass, National Prayer Vigil for Life.” January 24, 2013. <http://goo.gl/dNurXv>
- **Accompanying Expectant Mothers Considering Adoption** 8-panel brochure. Item #1646. Spanish Item #1656.
- **An Adoption Love Story** 8-panel brochure. Item #1445. Spanish Item #1455.

## SAINTS

- **Mary, Mother of God**
- **St. Joseph, Husband of Mary:** Foster father of Jesus, patron saint of unborn children and fathers
- **St. Gerard Majella:** Patron of expectant mothers
- **St. William of Rochester:** Patron of adopted children
- **St. Clotilde:** Patron of parents and adopted children

## REAL PEOPLE, REAL LIFE

“I wondered if my heart was big enough to love an adopted child as I would my biological child. There were also so many other variables to consider, one of which was the expense involved... We felt we had no control, but God reminded us again that He is always in control and that we could trust in Him. ... Andrew\* is two years old now, and... we can’t imagine loving a child whom we conceived more than we love Andrew. It is amazing how he fits our personalities so well. More and more every day we are so thankful to his birthmother for her selfless decision.”<sup>31</sup>

“A woman who becomes pregnant unexpectedly may feel as though her world is ending. To women with an unplanned pregnancy, Maya\* says, ‘This is survivable. Have hope.’”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, *An Adoption Love Story*, (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2014).

<sup>32</sup> USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, *Accompanying Expectant Mothers Considering Adoption* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2016).

## DID YOU KNOW?

- “The term used more widely now [than ‘given up for adoption’] is ‘placed for adoption,’ which helps highlight the selfless generosity of birthparents in choosing an adoptive family for their child.”<sup>33</sup>
- “Maya\* ... emphasizes the need for continued support of the birth-mother and her family after the placement. Some birth-parents grieve after the placement. It doesn’t mean the decision was wrong, but simply that the experience was life-changing.” Some adoption agencies offer support services after the placement, and there are also support resources that are searchable online.<sup>34</sup>

*\*Name changed for privacy.*

## INTERCESSIONS

For expectant mothers placing their children for adoption:  
May they receive loving support as they walk this journey;  
We pray to the Lord:

For married couples considering adoption:  
May the Holy Spirit guide their discernment,  
grant them peace, and make possible his holy will;  
We pray to the Lord:

## RELATED WORKS OF MERCY

Shelter the homeless  
Feed the hungry  
Give drink to the thirsty  
Comfort the sorrowful  
Instruct the ignorant  
Counsel the doubtful  
Pray for the living and the dead

<sup>33</sup> MaryPat St. Jean, “The Blessing of ‘Unanswered Prayers’: An Adoption Story”, <http://www.foryourmarriage.org/the-blessing-of-unanswered-prayers-an-adoption-story/> (accessed June 21, 2016).

<sup>34</sup> USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, *Accompanying Expectant Mothers Considering Adoption* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2016).





## 9 DAYS FOR LIFE

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHAT IS 9 DAYS FOR LIFE?

9 Days for Life is an annual period of prayer and action focused on cherishing the gift of every person's life. Surrounding the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children on January 22 (also the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*), the overarching intention of the centerpiece novena is the end to abortion. However, the novena also highlights many other facets of respecting each other's God-given dignity, especially by respecting human life at every stage and in every circumstance.

9 Days for Life is an opportunity to **pray** for the respect and protection of each person's life; to **gather together** in prayer, action, and fellowship with others; and to **share your stories** online!

### WHEN IS IT?

Saturday, January 21, 2017 - Sunday,  
January 29, 2017

### WHO IS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

Anyone can join individually at **www.9daysforlife.com**. However, leaders in parishes and various parish ministries, as well as in schools, dioceses, and other organizations, are especially important in raising awareness and in helping others participate in various ways.

### WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO PARTICIPATE?

- **PRAY:** The novena's short prayer guides highlight a different topic each day with five sections: intention, prayers, reflection, suggested actions, and related topical information.

Subscribe to receive daily text messages or emails; join the Facebook event or follow the USCCB on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram; download the novena in a printable format; or download the free mobile app. All options can be accessed at **www.9daysforlife.com**.

- **GATHER:** Join together with others in prayer, action, and fellowship. Organize or attend local events sponsored by dioceses, parishes, schools, etc., and/or host private gatherings of friends and family.
  - *Ideas for sponsored events:* Special blessing at send-off Mass or Holy Hour for pilgrims attending a march or rally

(suggested blessing available online: “Order for the Blessing of Pro-Life Pilgrims before Their Journey”); service project related to one of the topics highlighted; workshop on chastity, Theology of the Body, or sexual ethics.

- *Ideas for private gatherings:* Potluck dinner with discussion; lunch hour prayer with co-workers; movie night of age-appropriate films addressing life issues.

#### • SHARE:

- Share how you participated in 9 Days for Life on a particular day, why you are participating, or what being pro-life means to you. Post your filled-in “selfie sign” (available in 9 Days for Life leaders’ toolkit online) or a 5-15 second video using #9DaysforLife and tagging @USCCB on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. We’ll pick from the best to share!
- You can use the special cover photo and/or profile picture for your social media accounts from January 17-29, 2017 (or longer).
- Use the social media kit with pre-written posts to share the novena’s daily intentions, as well as other respect life images and information.

### WHAT TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP RAISE AWARENESS AND ENGAGE PEOPLE?

Leaders are encouraged to promote and incorporate 9 Days for Life into their regular programming and/or to host special, related events during this time. To aid leaders in these efforts, a leaders’ toolkit is available online with promotional, programmatic, and prayer resources. Visit [www.9daysforlife.com](http://www.9daysforlife.com).

- **PROMOTIONAL:** Pulpit/bulletin announcements; flyer; graphics (suitable for bulletins, emails, websites, newspapers, and more); 10” x 13” ad; pre-written articles.
- **PROGRAMMATIC:** Social media toolkit; selfie sign; Coffee & Conversation (discussion guide on additional pro-life articles); youth/young adult ministry guide (adaptable for other ages).
- **PRAYER:** 9 Days for Life novena; pro-life Rosary prayer intentions; Holy Hour templates; list of options for Mass readings for the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children; pro-life intercessions for the Prayer of the Faithful; homily notes; Order for the Blessing of Pro-Life Pilgrims.

### ARE THESE RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN SPANISH?

Yes! Both the leaders’ resources and the novena itself are available in both English and Spanish.

### IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?

You can sign up any time of year at [www.9daysforlife.com](http://www.9daysforlife.com)! Throughout the year, this webpage features email and text message subscription options for monthly messages structured like the daily prayer guides. (By signing up, you’ll automatically receive the novena in January.) There will be more information on 9 Days for Life prominently displayed during the time leading up to it, but the related pages are still accessible throughout the year.



YOUR PRAYERS MATTER.  
YOUR SACRIFICES MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



Image: A mosaic of Our Lady of Guadalupe decorates a side altar in the Church of Santa Maria della Famiglia at the Vatican. Dec. 15. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

**Who:**

You and thousands of other Catholics across the country!

**What:**

During 9 Days for Life, join thousands of Catholics nationwide in **9 days of prayer and action** focused on cherishing the gift of every person's life:

- 1) **Pray** for the respect and protection of each person and his or her life using short prayer guides with different intentions, reflections, and more each day!
- 2) **Gather** together in prayer, action, and fellowship with others.
- 3) **Share** your experience online!

**When:**

Sign up now & participate Saturday, January 21 - Sunday, January 29. (If you're getting started after January 21, it's okay!)

**How:**

Visit [www.9daysforlife.com](http://www.9daysforlife.com) to download the free mobile app or novena, sign up for daily emails or text messages, or discover many other ways you can participate!

**4 WAYS TO JOIN**

- Email
- App (iPhone & Android)
- Text Message
- Online



Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities  
[www.usccb.org/prolife](http://www.usccb.org/prolife)

[9daysforlife.com](http://9daysforlife.com)



## ADOPTION NOVENA

# NOVENA TO ST. JOSEPH: FOR THOSE ON THE PATH OF ADOPTION

Invoking the intercession of St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus, we pray that the Lord will bless all who travel upon the path of adoption. And, recalling the mercy which God our Father has shown to us, we also ask that, through our words and actions, they may encounter the outstretched hands of his mercy. May all know the care of the Father, whose love for each person “gushes forth from the depths naturally, full of tenderness and compassion, indulgence and mercy” (*Misericordiae vultus*, 6).

### FOR MOTHERS WHO PLACE THEIR CHILDREN FOR ADOPTION

#### SCRIPTURE

Pharaoh then commanded all his people, “Throw into the Nile every boy that is born, but you may let all the girls live.”

Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, and the woman conceived and bore a son. Seeing what a fine child he was, she hid him for three months. But when she could no longer hide him, she took a papyrus basket, daubed it with bitumen and pitch, and putting the child in it, placed it among the reeds on the bank of the Nile. His sister stationed herself at a distance to find out what would happen to him. Then Pharaoh’s daughter came down to bathe at the Nile, while her attendants walked along the bank of the Nile. Noticing the basket among the reeds, she sent her handmaid to fetch it. On opening it, she looked, and there was a baby boy crying! She was moved with pity for him...She named him Moses; for she said, “I drew him out of the water.”

Exodus 1:22 - 2:6, 10

#### SILENT REFLECTION

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Bless all expectant mothers  
who are placing their children for adoption  
and who may also be young and afraid.

They love their children so much  
that they are willing to place them  
with a loving family.

Bless, too, all the women who already  
have shown the sacrificial nature  
of a mother's love in making adoption plans  
for their children.

Give them all your courage and your peace, through  
Christ our Lord. Amen.

## PETITION TO ST. JOSEPH

St. Joseph,

Though you must have been troubled  
by Mary's news, you trusted in God's promises.

Elizabeth, too, though she was  
thought to be barren,  
trusted in the promises of God,  
and she bore a son, John,  
who would herald the arrival of the Messiah.

Hear the prayers of all mothers  
who place their children for adoption  
and intercede for them  
before your adopted Son and Savior.

St. Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
pray for us.

## CONCLUDING PRAYERS

*Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

## FOR FATHERS WHO PLACE THEIR CHILDREN FOR ADOPTION

### SCRIPTURE

For God so loved the world that he gave his only  
Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not  
perish but might have eternal life.

John 3:16

### SILENT REFLECTION

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

By your word, the whole world was created.

By your word, your Son was conceived  
and became man.

Bless all fathers of children who have been placed  
for adoption.

May these men always know of your great love for  
them, in the same way that they will always love  
their children.

Grant them your courage and your peace. Amen.

## PETITION TO ST. JOSEPH

St. Joseph,

You too experienced fear and doubt, but trusted  
always in the will of God.

Hear the prayers of these fathers  
and bring them to Jesus.

St. Joseph, ever faithful, ever loving, pray for us.

## CONCLUDING PRAYERS

*Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

## FOR FAMILY MEMBERS OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION

### SCRIPTURE

This is my commandment: love one another as  
I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay  
down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends  
if you do what I command you. I no longer call you  
slaves, because a slave does not know what his  
master is doing. I have called you friends, because  
I have told you everything I have heard from my  
Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who  
chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit  
that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father  
in my name he may give you. This I command you:  
love one another.

John 15:12-17

### SILENT REFLECTION

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

in word and sacrament, you make known the depth of your love for each person.

Never let us forget the tender compassion and mercy which you have shown and continue to show to us.

Instill in our hearts deep love for those who suffer, and help us reflect the face of the Father's mercy.

May the family members of each child to be placed for adoption lovingly support his or her mother as she chooses love and life.

And may these family members themselves find continued support in the kindness and encouragement of others.

Give to all wisdom and understanding, and may we be instruments of your grace. Amen.

## PETITION TO ST. JOSEPH

Blessed St. Joseph,

At the angel's direction, you supported Mary in her "yes" to bear the Son of God.

Trusting in the Lord, you accompanied her on that journey, offering her your protection and steadfast love.

Pray that the family members of each child placed for adoption may lovingly support the child's mother, and also find support in the open hearts of each other and of friends.

Please intercede for these family members, that they may be channels of God's tender love and also that they may themselves encounter the outstretched hands of your merciful love.

St. Joseph, Mainstay of Families, pray for us.

## CONCLUDING PRAYERS

*Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

## FOR CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION

## SCRIPTURE

Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked them, but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Matthew 19:13-14

## SILENT REFLECTION

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

You saw in the innocence of children the attributes which make us worthy of heaven—trust, joy, humility, obedience and faithfulness.

Bless all children who are awaiting adoption.

They seek love—may they find it in loving parents.

They seek stability—may they find a home rooted in faith.

They seek acceptance—may their gifts be recognized and nurtured.

And may they always know your steadfast love for them and the true joy of loving you.

## PETITION TO ST. JOSEPH

Blessed St. Joseph,

You welcomed the Christ Child into your home, provided for his daily needs, and helped him to grow in wisdom, age, and grace.

Hear the prayers of all children who are awaiting a loving home, and intercede for them

before your adopted Son and Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord.

St. Joseph, Guardian and Protector, pray for us.

## CONCLUDING PRAYERS

*Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

## FOR MARRIED COUPLES PURSUING ADOPTION

### SCRIPTURE

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, “Abba, Father!” The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Romans 8:14-17

### SILENT REFLECTION

#### PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

You are the Author of life and love.

You have called us by name  
and made us your sons  
and your daughters,  
and you know your plan for our lives.

If it be your will,  
bless those who are pursuing adoption,  
give them generous hearts,  
and send them a child to love  
and with whom to share your great love for us.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### PETITION TO ST. JOSEPH

St. Joseph,

You know the yearning in the hearts of  
married couples pursuing adoption.

They have so much love to give  
and wish to share that love with a child.

As you took Mary and Jesus  
into your home at Nazareth,  
may the grace of parenthood also be granted  
for such as these.

We beg your intercession before the Father.

St. Joseph, foster-father of Jesus, pray for us.

#### CONCLUDING PRAYERS

*Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

## FOR ADOPTED CHILDREN

### SCRIPTURE

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”

John 14:16-21

### SILENT REFLECTION

#### PRAYER

Father,

We are all your adopted children, not by flesh or by desire, but through the power of the Incarnation of your most beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

Bless those children who have been adopted into new families, that they may experience the love that you have shown us which surpasses even the love of a mother for her child.

In the difficult transitions and hardships that might beset them in their struggle for belonging, give every adopted child the grace to embrace their new family and trust in your paternal care for them, which lasts forever.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### PETITION TO ST. JOSEPH

Blessed Joseph,

Christ Jesus humbly accepted you as his earthly father and was obedient to you and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In turn, you raised Jesus as your own son, protected him from harm, provided for his daily needs and loved him with all your heart.

Pray for all adopted children— infants, children, and teens.

Hear the desires deep in their hearts  
for acceptance and love,  
and keep them safe from all anxiety.

And when they pray,  
intercede for them before the Father.

St. Joseph, Guardian of the Christ Child,  
pray for us.

#### CONCLUDING PRAYERS

*Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

#### FOR ADOPTIVE MOTHERS

##### SCRIPTURE

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother  
and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and  
Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and  
the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his  
mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to  
the disciple, "Behold, your mother."

John 19:25-27

##### SILENT REFLECTION

##### PRAYER

All loving and merciful Father,  
by your abiding presence and abundant grace you  
know our every need.

Bless all women who have adopted a child.

They have so valued your gift of life  
that they have welcomed a child into their home,  
and opened their hearts and their lives.

Help them to know your loving Providence,  
and guide them in their journey of motherhood.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

##### PETITION TO ST. JOSEPH

St. Joseph, husband of the Virgin Mary,  
you witnessed first-hand  
the joy of her motherhood.

Be attentive to the needs of these women  
who long to welcome a child through adoption.

Give encouragement to all adoptive mothers, that,  
with the support of their husbands, they might  
know the joy that comes from a lifetime of serving  
as mother, nurturer, and friend.

Intercede for them before the Father, we ask you.

St. Joseph, spouse of the Mother of God,  
pray for us.

#### CONCLUDING PRAYERS

*Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

#### FOR ADOPTIVE FATHERS

##### SCRIPTURE

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came  
about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to  
Joseph, but before they lived together, she was  
found with child through the holy Spirit. Joseph  
her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet  
unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to  
divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when,  
behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a  
dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be  
afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For  
it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been  
conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are  
to name him Jesus, because he will save his people  
from their sins." ...When Joseph awoke, he did as  
the angel of the Lord had commanded him and  
took his wife into his home.

Matthew 1: 18-21, 24

##### SILENT REFLECTION

##### PRAYER

Fatherhood has its origins in God,  
and so we pray to you, Father Almighty,  
for those men who have adopted a child.

Give them a mind receptive to your guidance,  
a patient voice, and a loving heart.

May they know the joy of following your will and  
reflecting your constant and steady love.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

##### PETITION TO ST. JOSEPH

St. Joseph, adoptive father of Jesus,  
you, too, welcomed a child into your home  
because you were obedient to the plan of God.

Give encouragement to all adoptive fathers,  
that with the support of their wives,  
they might know the joy that comes  
from serving as guardian, father, and protector.

St. Joseph, patron of fathers, pray for us.

#### CONCLUDING PRAYERS

*Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

**FOR FAMILY MEMBERS  
WELCOMING CHILDREN  
THROUGH ADOPTION**

**SCRIPTURE**

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named...that you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:14-15, 17-19

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**PRAYER**

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
You are one God, living in a relationship of love.

When Christ became Man,  
you shared that divine love with the human race, forever wedding earth to heaven.

Send your blessings upon all who nurture children who have been adopted.

Give them generous and understanding hearts.

Give us all a spirit of understanding and welcome so that all peoples of every nation, race, and tongue may live together peacefully as members of your family.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**PETITION TO ST. JOSEPH**

Blessed Joseph,

You took Mary and Jesus into your home. You followed the prescripts of the Law, presented Jesus in the Temple, taught him skills at the plane and the lathe; and, daily, you shared traditions which were built on the covenants he came to fulfill.

Hear the prayers of the siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and entire families of children who have been adopted.

May they be a source of loving welcome and a fount of faith.

Through Christ our Lord.

St. Joseph, descendant of David, pray for us.

**CONCLUDING PRAYERS**

*Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

Pope Francis, *Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy: Misericordiae vultus* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), no. 6.

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## **Respect Life Program**

**Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

**3211 Fourth Street NE  
Washington, DC 20017-1194**

**Tel: 202-541-3070  
Fax: 202-541-3054**

**[www.usccb.org/respectlife](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife)  
Email: [prolife@usccb.org](mailto:prolife@usccb.org)**