



DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

4800 Union Deposit Road | Harrisburg, PA 17111-3710
bishopsoffice@hbgdiocese.org | (717) 657-4804 ext. 354 | www.hbgdiocese.org

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Church invites us to reflect deeply on the sacredness of life through our annual observance of Respect Life Month. This is not merely a time for reflection; it is a call to action rooted in our faith and commitment to the dignity of every human being, from conception to natural death.

The teachings of our Catholic faith remind us that life is a precious gift from God. In the Book of Genesis, we are told that we are created in the image and likeness of God, and in the Gospel of John, Christ says, “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10b). This profound truth calls us to recognize the inherent dignity of every person, regardless of their circumstances. Each life possesses immeasurable value, and as followers of Christ, it is our duty to honor and protect that life.

In today’s world, we face numerous challenges that threaten this sacred gift. From the rising rates of abortion to the growing acceptance of euthanasia, and the indifference for the marginalized, the homeless, the elderly and the refugee, it is disheartening to witness the disregard for human life. Yet we do not despair as people of hope. Instead, this moment presents an opportunity to advocate for life, to educate ourselves and others, and to foster a culture that respects and cherishes every individual.

This month, I urge you to engage in acts of charity and service that affirm life. One way to work towards a culture of life includes gaining a greater understanding of the Church’s teachings on life issues. Resources are available through the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) at www.respectlife.org/respect-life-month. Respect Life Month is also an excellent time to volunteer with the many life-affirming organizations found throughout our Diocese, including pregnancy resource centers, elderly care facilities, and community outreach programs. These organizations work to support mothers and fathers, families, the elderly and the vulnerable in our communities.

Finally, we cannot underestimate the power of prayer. Together, we lift up in faith and hope all those affected by life issues—those facing unplanned pregnancies, the aged, the infirm, and those struggling with mental health challenges. To keep life at the forefront of our minds, I encourage you to participate in our Celebrating Life texting campaign, where you will receive a daily text prayer reminder regarding one of the many life aspects for which our Church advocates. I also invite you to join me on Sunday, October 20 for our Diocesan Life and Dignity Mass. The Mass will be at 11:15 a.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Abbottstown.

As we journey through October, let us commit ourselves anew to being voices of hope and champions of life. With faith and courage, we can build a culture of life. Saint Joseph, Defender of Life, pray for us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior
Bishop of Harrisburg