

# **U.S. bishops recognize three as ‘people of life’**

HOUSTON – The U.S. bishops’ Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities recognized three individuals who have continuously answered the call to respect life.

The honors came Aug. 9 during the secretariat’s annual national conference for respect life ministers, this year held in downtown Houston.

The USCCB honored Monsignor Philip Reilly, founder of the Helpers of God’s Precious Infants, a worldwide ministry that leads street vigils and counsels women heading to abortion clinics; Patricia Bainbridge, a longtime pro-life advocate and adviser who currently chairs Human Life International; and William May, a celebrated scholar, publisher and writer and senior fellow at the Culture of Life Foundation.

Before the recognition dinner, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston celebrated Mass for the 150 pro-life ministers and supporters at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. The cardinal is the current chairman of the USCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities.

The People of Life award is given to those who have demonstrated a lifetime commitment to the pro-life movement, promoted respect for dignity of the human person and advocated for an end to the culture of death.

Monsignor Reilly accepted his award on behalf of “all of the people outside abortion centers praying, counseling and doing God’s work. They are saving lives and changing this culture.”

Citing the words and example of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, Monsignor Reilly said the efforts of those working in the respect life movement can only be understood through the eyes of faith.

“Your job is not to save babies – your job is to save souls,” he said. “Our job is not our job, it is Jesus Christ working through us, redeeming the world.”

Monsignor Reilly noted that tragically, no record is kept of the existence of the unborn.

“When you stand outside those abortion clinics lovingly, you give recognition to their existence,” he said. “(People) can then see the face of love, the face of Jesus Christ. If they can experience the hope that is in Jesus Christ to a world that is in darkness, suddenly that place of midnight becomes a new day.”

May, professor emeritus of moral theology at the Pontifical Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family at The Catholic University of America in Washington, has written more than 220 journal articles, has authored, co-authored or edited 24 books and is at work on three more.

Bainbridge recently retired from her 10-year post as director of the respect life office and natural family planning coordinator for the Diocese of Rockford, Ill., where she was also the “Lifelines” columnist for the diocesan newspaper.

Since the People of Life awards began three years ago, 11 people have received the honor.