



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

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September 9, 2020

Dear Priests, Deacons, and Pastoral Life Directors,

On October 4, 2020 we celebrate the annual Respect Life Sunday, which begins Respect Life Month. Our theme this year is “Live the Gospel of Life,” and I can think of no more appropriate theme for today. The exhortation to *live* is reminiscent of St. Paul VI’s now famous phrase: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” We are each called to *live* the *Gospel of Life* in both *word* and *deed* and this is precisely the approach that I have witnessed with the many important ministries at the service of life. I recall, in a particular way, the patient accompaniment of [Project Rachel](#) (a ministry of hope and healing after abortion), [Holy Innocents](#) (a ministry for families that offers burial of preborn children after miscarriage), and the great pregnancy resources throughout the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

However, even in the face of these beautiful witnesses, we continuously encounter violence against the human person – everything from racism to physician-assisted suicide, which will undoubtedly be a concern in Maryland’s legislature again. But let me be clear – *we must stand firmly against any violation of the dignity of every human person*. Our Lord demands nothing less. To this end, I humbly ask you to proclaim the *Gospel of Life* in some specific way this month:

- support a local pregnancy support center as their work continues and even increases through this pandemic
- preach specifically about the dignity of the human person, the life issues, and an exhortation to your parishioners to live the *Gospel of Life*
- include sensitive and thoughtful teaching and outreach regarding the life issues in your parish social media accounts
- raise awareness of and support Project Rachel and Holy Innocents, two critical Archdiocesan outreach ministries; and
- begin work on “[Walking with Moms in Need](#)” to assess your parish’s ability to support and refer expectant mothers to the resources they need.

To learn more about any of these ministries and Respect Life Month collateral for social media and bulletins, visit the Respect Life Office website:

<https://www.archbalt.org/respect-life/> or contact the Coordinator for Education and Outreach Erin Younkins: Erin.Younkins@archbalt.org. Erin is a new coordinator, so please have your parish coordinator or “Walking with Moms in Need” liaison connect with her.

This year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of St. John Paul II's landmark encyclical: *Evangelium Vitae*, so I will simply close with his words: "Evangelization is a profoundly ecclesial act, which calls all the various workers of the Gospel to action, according to their individual charisms and ministry. This is also the case with regard to the proclamation of the Gospel of life, an integral part of that Gospel which is Jesus Christ himself. We are at the service of this Gospel, sustained by the awareness that we have received it as a gift and are sent to preach it to all humanity, 'to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8). With humility and gratitude we know that we are the people of life and for life, and this is how we present ourselves to everyone."

Thank you for *living* and *proclaiming* the Gospel of Life!

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+William E. Lori". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore