

CHOOSING A CULTURE OF LIFE

In all of the dioceses in the U.S. the Month of October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary and to respect life. However, all of the seasons of the year are also opportune times for us to celebrate the Gospel of Life and to pray that we will make good choices which contribute to a Culture of Life in our society.

Human life given to us by God and made holy by the incarnation of his Son is the most precious gift and deserves our gratitude, respect and protection. We live the Gospel values of God's Kingdom when we ourselves make good choices and cherish human life in all of its stages. Human Life at the moment of conception has the primacy of position since the destruction of life at its beginnings destroys the possibility of the future life of a person. Life is also destroyed that is not nurtured after its beginnings and throughout all the subsequent stages of life until natural death. Let us pray that we in our Catholic Community may foster a Culture of Life that serves the most vulnerable in our society.

Heavenly Father, Lord and Maker of all, you adorn your creation with splendor and beauty. You fashion human lives in your image and likeness. You give your sacred dignity to all human life. You made of us the special crowning of your creation. Help us to value each person, created by your love and to cherish each life as the Saints who have revered the work of your hands: Holy Mary, who said "yes" to be the Mother of God and embraced the humanity of your Son; Saint Joseph, who accepted Mary's child as his own and cared for him with your fatherly affection; and humble Saint Francis of Assisi, who was so devoted to the humanity of Christ in His Incarnation, Crucifixion and the Eucharist that his heart burst into song with appreciation to you, O God, and to your Son for humbly taking on our human life.

Awaken in our age among young people this same appreciation that stands ready to nurture and sustain your precious gift of life. May every heart reverence what you find good in created humanity and which you revealed in the life of your Son. Lord, Giver of all life, help us to value each person whom you created in all the stages of their life: Help us to assist parents *before their child is born* by offering to them all the care and resources that they need in preparing to accept new life into their lives. Help us to assist parents who are sheltering their unborn child in the womb that they may have our support as they welcome new life *when their child is born*. Help us to assist parents *after their child is born* by joyfully sharing in the responsibility of offering our care and resources to them throughout the maturing years of their child.

Lord, we are most grateful for the gift of life throughout all the stages of life. In your mercy, guide and assist our efforts to protect the dignity and value of all human life, born and unborn, that we may respect the sacredness of life at every stage. And, help us to extend the gentle hand of mercy and forgiveness to those who do not reverence your gift of life. To all, grant pardon for the times when we have failed to be grateful for your precious gift of life or when we have failed to see the worth of life in others. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord, our Savior and our Brother. Amen.