

Mission Statement

Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, “that all may be one...as we are one” (Jn 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God’s sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.

Gaudium et Spes (24)

The Respect Life Office has been formed to assist Cardinal DiNardo in his evangelical task of bringing the fundamental truth that **“human life is sacred from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death”** to the Archdiocese and to help bring about a conversion of heart and mind for all to be open to God’s special gift of life. The church, in truth and love, presents a challenge to the moral disorder of our time and the terrible suffering of so many caught up in a way of life unfit for the human person.

Respect Life Volunteers understand their apostolate as

A work of **Evangelization**, meeting those who suffer where they are, helping them to come to the Church for help and support, by meeting Christ in the person of the volunteer. The ultimate purpose of respect life work is **to bring people to God** and particularly to help those separated from Christ and the Church as a result of abortion, euthanasia, etc., so that they come to know God’s infinite love and mercy through the Church and particularly in the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Respect for Life is at the heart of the new evangelization. The sacredness of human life from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death is a central part of the Christian message. It is God who gives life and only He may take life.

Encourage the lay faithful involved in respect life activities to come to **understand and live the lay vocation**; to understand the salvific role of work in their human and spiritual formation; to engage in those apostolic endeavors only they are positioned to do, so that they bring about a transformation and renewal of the temporal order in Christ. Illustrate and live out the **like-with-like** apostolate of the laity through an apostolate of friendship and of presence, relying on the special gifts of the laity.

Encourage collaborative **ministry** working in solidarity with all the other ministries and apostolates in the parish and Archdiocese, i.e., parish social ministry, Catholic Charities, CHRISTUS HealthCare, etc.

Accepting the universal call to holiness for all Christians, encourage the laity involved in respect life work to actively engage in a program of personal sanctification through the local parish, a third order or one of the lay movements. Encourage the volunteers **to come closer to God**, through acts of self giving to the other and through a greater reliance on prayer and worship in their own lives.

Offer **Sacramental reconciliation and healing** needed by so many today.

To **“focus the public discussion where it must ultimately focus – on the morality and legality of abortion”** and the other life issues by developing and teaching, in cooperation with the appropriate Archdiocesan institutions, a comprehensive curriculum in the moral teachings of the Church.

To implement the **“Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign in Support of Life”** by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, December, 2001 (third edition) Programs are parish based to encourage solidarity, subsidiary, and collaborative ministry among parishioners. Respect for Life is for all people and all groups in the parish.