



Office of
THE BISHOP

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October 3/4, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Respect Life Sunday this year coincides with the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi. He is a fitting patron for us in regard to his respect for all of God's creation of which the culmination is the human person made in His image and likeness. *Respect Life Sunday* also falls during the year of the 25th anniversary of the encyclical of Saint John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae, The Gospel of Life*. He gave us this great gift on the Solemnity of the Annunciation, March 25, 1995. Indeed, through Mary's yes to God's will, the Son of God became incarnate in her womb at the moment of conception.

Saint Pope John Paul II's encyclical begins with the words, "The Gospel of life is at the heart of Jesus' message." To our society today, faced with a great deal of threats to life and misunderstandings of its dignity, it is necessary to proclaim the sanctity of life from the moment of conception until natural death. So many of the world's critical problems would be put in proper perspective with a fundamental respect for the gift of life at every stage.

The need to promote the dignity of all life is imperative but, at this particular political time, even more so for that of an unborn child. Horrific abortion legislation within various states has gone far beyond *Roe v. Wade*, while tax dollars continue to be proposed to fund abortions.

In his apostolic exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis clearly stated that, "Our defense of the innocent unborn needs to be clear, firm and passionate for at stake is the dignity of the human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development." On one occasion the Pope expressed, "Last century, the whole world was scandalized by what the Nazis did to purify the race. Today, we do the same thing but with white gloves!" As the United States Bishops have stated so clearly in *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, "The common outcry, which is justly made on behalf of human rights – for example, the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture – is false and illusory if the right to life, the most basic and fundamental right, and the condition for all other personal rights, is not defended with maximum determination."

I wish to express my deep gratitude to the faithful of our Diocese for their staunch and loyal support in fostering respect for life at every stage. The present election time is a critical one and needs our prayers, attention and action in a special way, particularly in fostering protection of the unborn.

With every prayerful wish, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

† Gerald M. Barbarito

Most Reverend Gerald M. Barbarito
Bishop of Palm Beach

NOTE TO PASTORS: Please have this letter read at all Masses and posted in the parish digital bulletin the weekend of October 3rd and 4th.