

The Responsibilities and Rewards of Being a Parish Respect Life/ACCL Liaison



"What is urgently called for is a general mobilization of consciences and a united ethical effort to activate a great campaign in support of life.

All together, we must build a new culture of life: new, because it will be able to confront and solve today's unprecedented problems affecting human life; new, because it will be adopted with deeper and more dynamic conviction by all Christians; new, because it will be capable of bringing about a serious and courageous cultural dialogue among all parties."

Pope John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life*, no. 95

The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis is dedicated to upholding the sanctity of human life and encourages you to consider assuming a leadership role as one of two Respect Life/ACCL Liaisons for your parish. Perhaps you have worked tirelessly promoting pro-life efforts for a number of years, or perhaps you are an inactive pro-lifer looking for a way to get involved. Either way, if you are eager to dedicate yourself to the cause of life and have the energy to successfully establish or invigorate a Respect Life/ACCL program in your parish, your commitment is needed without delay. What would that commitment look like? Read on to find out.

The Parish Respect Life/ACCL Committee

Actively promoting a renewed respect for human life is the responsibility of every Catholic. The parish respect life committee assists in a special way by helping to make the parish a center of life, a place where parishioners understand the issues and the importance of meeting the needs of those who are most vulnerable—especially mothers and their unborn children, and those who are seriously ill or dying and their families. It may be a distinct committee, or it might be a subcommittee of another parish organization. Whatever its structure, its membership ideally should include representatives of both adult and youth parish groups, members of organizations that represent persons with disabilities, persons of minority cultures, and those responsible for education and pastoral care.

The parish committee relies on the archdiocesan respect life coordinator for information and guidance. The committee should play a vital role in parish life and enjoy the strong support of priests and other key personnel. The committee should also dovetail its efforts from time to time with other programs of the parish.

The Parish Respect Life/ACCL Leaders

Two co-leaders of the parish committee should be appointed by the pastor, and it is important that the pastor and coordinators be able to work well together. The chair recruits volunteers to help meet the needs the committee serves. Parish committees should be mindful of the need for renewal from time to time in regard to membership, talents, and interests.

Responsibilities

Develop a Respect Life program at your parish around four major areas, as established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

- **Information and Education** to deepen understanding of the sanctity of human life and the humanity of unborn children, the moral evil of intentionally killing innocent human beings—whether at the beginning of life or at its end—and the mission of the Church to witness to and serve all human life.
- **Pastoral Care** for women with problems related to pregnancy; for all who have been involved in abortion; for those who are disabled, sick, and dying, and their families and caregivers; for those who have lost loved ones to violent crime; and for those in prison sentenced to death.
- **Public Policy** efforts directed to restoring legal protection to the lives of unborn children and those vulnerable to pressures to end their lives by assisted suicide, and to providing morally acceptable alternatives to abortion and assisted suicide.
- **Prayer and Worship** directed to participation in the sacramental life of the Church and in programs of communal and individual prayer, that the culture of death that surrounds us today will be replaced by a culture of life and love.

Guidance and support in developing parish programs will be provided by the Archdiocesan Respect Life office, and the diocesan network of parish Respect Life/ACCL Committee Leaders. Most *communication* with the Archdiocese will be electronic and written. In-person meetings will take place from time to time.

Rewards

The gift of your valuable time, talent, and energy will be rewarded with the fulfillment of knowing you have been an instrument of God by carrying out His will in protecting the most vulnerable of our society. Indeed, by your work and sacrifice, you will be the very reason that more than one little child will be given the chance to live. This work will be an opportunity to demonstrate your gratitude for the many blessings that have been bestowed on you.

You will become more aware of life issues and learn the basis for the Church's teaching on such delicate matters. You will have a necessary and integral role to play in keeping fellow parishioners informed and empowering them to get involved in the Respect Life movement.

Your selfless service allows the Church to efficiently and effectively serve her members. Your desire to simply give something of yourself to touch the lives of others is an important gift. Thank you for considering this opportunity to serve.

“Now let us do something beautiful for God.”

Cappy Moore

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