



# January

## Family Catechesis

### MONTH OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

January 2024

## Family Catechesis Schedule

### January

#### Sanctifying Time

- 10-Holy Cross 6:30 pm
- 10- *Confirmation Check-In*
- 14-St. Lawrence 9:00 am

### February

#### Eucharistic Adoration

- 4-St. Lawrence 9:00 am
- 7-Holy Cross 6:30 pm [CYM]
- 7- *Confirmation Check-In*
- 4/7-*First Eucharist Parent Meeting*
- 14- *Ash Wednesday +*

## Feasts Days to Celebrate

In the first part of January we continue to rejoice and celebrate Christ's coming at Bethlehem and in our hearts. We have the wonderful feasts of *Mary, Mother of God*, where we honor Mary's highest title, and then we follow the Magi to the crib as they bring their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh on Epiphany. Finally we reach the culmination of this season with the Baptism of Our Lord by St. John the Baptist. With a touch of sadness we take down our decorations and enter into the liturgical period known as Ordinary Time where we will devote ourselves to the mystery of Christ in its entirety. This is a time of growth and an opportunity to allow the dignity of Sunday to shine forth.

The month's major feasts include: **Mary Mother of God** (January 1), **St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen** (January 2), **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton** (January 4), **St. John Neumann** (January 5), **St. Andre Bessette** (January 6), **St. Raymond of Penafort** (January 7), **Sts. Fabian & Sebastian** (January 20), **St. Agnes** (January 21), **St. Vincent of Saragossa** (January 23), the **Conversion of St. Paul** (January 25), **Sts. Timothy and Titus** (January 26), **St. Angela Merici** (January 27), and **St. Thomas Aquinas** (January 28).

# Catholic Faith Focus

## Sanctifying Time

### *Living Catholic- Holy Months*

**January: The Holy Name of Jesus** – There is no name more powerful than the name of Jesus. The Catechism sums up the power of this name beautifully: “The name ‘Jesus’ contains all: God and man and the whole economy of creation and salvation. To pray ‘Jesus’ is to invoke him and to call him within us. His name is the only one that contains the presence it signifies. Jesus is the Risen One, and whoever invokes the name of Jesus is welcoming the Son of God who loved him and who gave himself up for him” (CCC #2666)

**February: The Holy Family** – The Holy Family is an earthly reflection of the Holy Trinity. By meditating on the Holy Family, we can learn the meaning of love, obedience, and true fatherhood and motherhood. We are also reminded that the family is the foundational unit of both society and the Church.

**March: St. Joseph** – St. Joseph is the icon of God the Father: silent but active and perfectly providing for the needs of all. The Church constantly invokes the protection of St. Joseph, admonishing us to *ite ad Joseph*, go to Joseph.

**April: The Blessed Sacrament** – Holy Church is the guardian of the Holy Eucharist. For two thousand years, she has guarded this treasure, administering it to the faithful and proclaiming that it is nothing less than Jesus himself. We can never be too devoted to the Blessed Sacrament or show it too much honor.

**May: The Blessed Virgin Mary** – Our Lady has long been associated with the beauty of flowers and the coming of spring. This is fitting because she is both beautiful and the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the life of the world. In May, the Church remembers our glorious lady with crowning's and processions in her honor.

**June: The Sacred Heart of Jesus** – The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the revelation of God's immense love for us. It is often depicted as a fiery furnace, pierced and broken, but beating with love. The Sacred Heart is also a profound reminder of the humanity of our Lord, for his heart is not a mere symbol, but a true physical reality.

# Live Your Catholic Faith

Place a picture of Jesus at your Home Altar

Discover the richness of Sanctifying time-by living the month and daily devotions

**July: The Precious Blood** – The blood of Christ saves us from sin. It is the blood of Christ that gives us the hope of heaven. St. Paul tells us that Jesus reconciled “to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20). Without the blood of Christ shed for us, all would be lost.

**August: The Immaculate Heart of Mary** – The heart of Mary is a motherly heart, a heart full of love and mercy for her children. The heart of Mary is also the channel through which all the graces of God flow down to us. She is “our life, our sweetness, and our hope.”

**September: The Seven Sorrows of Mary** – Aside from Jesus, no human being has suffered more than our Blessed Mother. In perfect obedience to the will of God, she consented to her sons torture, humiliation, and brutal executed for our salvation. As any parent knows, watching one’s child suffer is the greatest suffering of all. She still bears the sufferings of her divine Son in her heart.

**October: The Holy Rosary** – The rosary is one of the most powerful weapons the Church possesses. We are constantly exhorted by saints, popes, and Our Lord and Our Lady themselves to pray this simple yet profound prayer. Accordingly, Mother Church has set aside a whole month to the promotion of this prayer.

**November: The Souls in Purgatory** – The souls in purgatory are suffering a great deal, and they cannot pray for themselves. They are our brothers and sisters, and as members of the body of Christ, we must pray and offer sacrifices for those who have gone before us, asking that they may rest in the light of God’s presence.

**December: The Immaculate Conception** – The Immaculate Conception of Mary is a profound mystery. In the Immaculate Conception, Mary was without sin from the first moment of her conception. She is perfectly united forever to her spouse, the Holy Spirit. Their fruitful union produced a wedding of heaven and earth in the God-Man, Jesus Christ. We will meditate on these truths for all eternity. Source: catholicgentle-

man.com

# Catholic Faith Focus

## Sanctifying Time

### *Living Catholic- Holy Days*

**Sunday: The Holy Trinity** – Sunday is dedicated to the Holy Trinity. This is entirely fitting as Sunday is the first day of the week and the day when we offer God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit our praise, adoration, and thanksgiving.

**Monday: The Angels** – Monday is the day in which we remember the angels. Angels are powerful guardians, and each of us is protected by one. Many of the saints had a great devotion to the angels in general and to their guardian angel in particular.

**Tuesday: The Apostles** – The Catholic Church is apostolic. That is, it is founded on the authority and teaching of the apostles, most especially that of St. Peter to whom Jesus gave the keys of his kingdom. Each bishop is a direct successor of the apostles.

**Wednesday: Saint Joseph** – Saint Joseph is known as the prince and chief patron of the Church. As the earthly father of Jesus, he had a special role in protecting, providing for, and instructing Jesus during his earthly life. Now that Christ is ascended into heaven, St. Joseph continues his fatherly guardianship of Christ's body, the Church.

**Thursday: The Holy Eucharist** – Our Lord instituted the most holy Eucharist on a Thursday, so it is fitting that we remember this greatest of sacraments on this day. The Eucharist is the greatest gift of God to mankind, as it is nothing less than Jesus himself. What gift could be greater?

**Friday: The Passion** – Jesus was scourged, mocked, and crucified on a Friday. Because of this, the Church has always set aside Fridays of days of penance and sacrifice. While the U.S. sadly does not require abstinence from meat on Fridays, penance is still required in one form or another. This day should always be a day of repentance and a day in which we recall Christ's complete self-sacrifice to save us from our sins.

**Saturday: Our Lady** – There are a number of theological reasons Saturdays are dedicated to Our Lady, perhaps the most significant is that on Holy Saturday, when everyone else had abandoned Christ in the tomb, she was faithful to him, confidently waiting for his resurrection on the first day of the week.

# Family Prayer

## Prayer to the Holy Name of Jesus

Lord Jesus,  
we humbly pray to You to give us all a great reverence  
and respect for Your most holy name.  
Forgive us for ever having used the name of Jesus in vain,  
or without due respect.

Help us remember how reverently and lovingly,  
Your Mother Mary used the name of Jesus,  
and how humbly Saint Joseph called You  
and spoke to You by name.

Your name, dear Jesus,  
is above every other name in heaven or on earth,  
because You are the Jesus,  
the Savior of all men)  
You have saved us,  
and You have told us to ask God anything in Your name,  
and it would be granted.

We ask You,  
humbly and confidently,  
to bless us and our work,  
and give us the rich treasures of Your Divine grace,  
without which we cannot even so much  
as pronounce the name of Jesus.

Amen

# Catechesis: Pray for the Unborn

You're invited to join Catholics nationwide praying for the protection of human life.

The annual *9 Days for Life* novena will take place from January 16th through the 24th.

Daily devotional pages are attached for you to use.

The Novena consists of:

1 Our Father

3 Hail Mary's

1 Glory Be

with the intention offered for the day.

January 22 -National Day of prayer for the unborn

**Act of Love**

PRAY the Novena for 9 Days for Life!



## Family Catechesis Team

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## INTERCESSION

May the tragic practice of abortion end.

## PRAYERS

Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be

## REFLECTION

At every stage and in every circumstance, we are held in existence by God's love. The presence of an illness, disability, or other challenging situation never diminishes the value of a human life. God does not call us to perfection of appearance or abilities, but to perfection in *love*. Christ invites us to embrace our own lives and the lives of others as true *gifts*.

Abortion tragically rejects the truth that every life is a good and perfect gift, deserving protection. This violent practice ends the life of a human being at its very beginning and horribly wounds all those involved. But Christ came that we "might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10), taking on human flesh for the sake of our redemption. May our culture experience the power of God's transforming love, that all eyes may be opened to the incredible beauty of every human life.



## ACTS OF REPARATION

(Choose one.)

- Take a break from television and movies today. Consider spending some of that time praying with today's reflection.
- Pray the short prayer "Every Life is Worth Living," reflecting on the gift of human life. (The prayer is also available to order or download at [usccb.org/worth-living](https://usccb.org/worth-living).)

*Heavenly Father, thank you for the precious gift of life. Help us to cherish and protect this gift, even in the midst of fear, pain, and suffering. Give us love for all people, especially the most vulnerable, and help us bear witness to the truth that every life is worth living.*

*Grant us the humility to accept help when we are in need, and teach us to be merciful to all. Through our words and actions, may others encounter the outstretched hands of Your mercy. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

- Offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for today's intention.

## ONE STEP FURTHER

Abortion is frequently a topic in the news, political debates, and everyday conversations with family or friends. Because abortion can be a controversial and emotional issue in any arena, many of us may feel intimidated when the topic arises, not knowing what to say. "Another Look at Abortion" provides a basic overview and summarizes key points. This article will help you be better prepared to witness to the sanctity of human life: [respectlife.org/another-look-at-abortion](https://respectlife.org/another-look-at-abortion).





If you or someone you know is suffering from participation in abortion, confidential, compassionate help is available. Visit [hopeafterabortion.org](https://hopeafterabortion.org).

## INTERCESSION

May each person suffering from participation in abortion find forgiveness, hope, and healing in Christ.

## PRAYERS

Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be

## REFLECTION

Countless children's lives have been ended by abortion, and countless parents and family members suffer guilt, grief, and regret—often in silence. Yet God's greatest desire is to forgive. No matter how far we have each strayed from His side, He says to us, "Don't be afraid. Draw close to my heart." Be assured that it is never too late to seek God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Consider the parable of the Prodigal Son. After repenting of sinning against his father, he returns from far away to seek forgiveness and work as a servant. But his father sees him approaching, runs to warmly embrace him, and hosts a banquet to celebrate his return. So, too, does God welcome all His children who come to Him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation with contrite hearts, no matter how serious the sin. Let us turn confidently to Our Lord, Who is love and mercy.

## ACTS OF REPARATION

(Choose one.)

- Abstain from meat today.
- Pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy for today's intention ([uscgb.org/divine-mercy-chaplet](https://uscgb.org/divine-mercy-chaplet)).
- Offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for today's intention.

## ONE STEP FURTHER

If a friend confided in you that she had an abortion, would you be able to listen and respond in a way that brings her closer to forgiveness and healing? Learn how in "How to Talk to a Friend Who's Had an Abortion" ([uscgb.org/friend-had-abortion](https://uscgb.org/friend-had-abortion)).



## INTERCESSION

May every pregnant mother receive compassionate care and support as she nurtures the life in her womb.

## PRAYERS

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## REFLECTION

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, she opened her heart to receive his message that she would conceive the Son of God in her womb. As a young bride who had not yet lived with her husband, Mary knew that her pregnancy presented many challenges. Despite this knowledge, she faithfully responded, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38).

Like the Blessed Mother, women who unexpectedly become pregnant often face significant challenges. They, too, are called to place their trust in God and faithfully respond to His *gift* of new life. And we are called to walk with them in their time of need. As Jesus taught us, when we love and serve others, we are loving and serving Him.

May all expectant mothers be encouraged by Mary’s example and receive support and grace in lovingly welcoming their children into the world.

## ACTS OF REPARATION

*(Choose one.)*

- Pray for pregnant and parenting moms in need in your local community, and ask the Lord how you can help them by using your unique gifts. (You can sign up for monthly stories of how Catholics across the country are *Walking with Moms in Need* at [walkingwithmoms.com/subscribe](http://walkingwithmoms.com/subscribe).)
- Pray the Angelus today ([uscgb.org/angelus](http://uscgb.org/angelus)). You might also consider saying it every day for the next week—on awakening, at noon, or at 6 p.m. (or all three times).
- Offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for today’s intention.

## ONE STEP FURTHER

When a woman is facing an unexpected pregnancy, the reaction of the first person she tells tends to set the tone for her decision-making. Pregnancy can be difficult and frightening, but no matter the circumstances, it’s important for an expectant mother to feel supported and loved. Read “10 Ways to Support Her When She’s Unexpectedly Expecting” ([respectlife.org/support-her](http://respectlife.org/support-her)) for simple tips on how to provide loving, life-affirming support for a friend who is unexpectedly pregnant. Your support may be the only support she receives.



## INTERCESSION

May every father of a preborn child lovingly support the mother of his child in welcoming new life.

## PRAYERS

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## REFLECTION

Fatherhood has its origins in God, who chose to reveal Himself to us as Our Father, sending his only Son for the sake of our salvation. Fathers therefore have a special role “in revealing and in reliving on earth the very fatherhood of God” (*Familiaris consortio* 25). Fathers are called to exhibit “generous responsibility for the life conceived under the heart of the mother” (FC 25). They are uniquely entrusted with the protection and defense of both mother and child and, in this way, in safeguarding the sanctity of human life.

As evidenced in our world today, the role of the father “is of unique and irreplaceable importance” (FC 25). Often women choose abortion because they do not have the support of the child’s father, or—even worse—the father of the child pressures her to make the decision to abort. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge with compassion that men can also be overwhelmed by an unexpected pregnancy and that society increasingly tells them that they should have no say in their children’s lives. In the face of these false messages, we pray that fathers of preborn children will find courage in the example of Saint Joseph—who embraced the role of father amid difficult circumstances—and offer loving, life-affirming support to the mothers of their children.

## ACTS OF REPARATION

(Choose one.)

- Give up sleeping on your pillow—or even your bed—tonight. Offer this small sacrifice for the intention that fathers of preborn children will courageously answer their call to support both mother and child.
- Pray a decade of the Rosary for all fathers of preborn children, that through her intercession, Our Lady may inspire in them the virtues of Saint Joseph: [uscgb.org/how-to-pray-the-rosary](https://uscgb.org/how-to-pray-the-rosary).
- Offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for today’s intention.

## ONE STEP FURTHER

Research continues to show that one of the top reasons a woman chooses abortion is due to a lack of financial resources. Read “Poverty and Abortion: A Vicious Cycle,” which explores the connections between abortion and poverty, and how the absence of fathers contributes to this ongoing cycle ([respectlife.org/poverty-and-abortion](https://respectlife.org/poverty-and-abortion)).



## INTERCESSION

May every pregnant mother choosing adoption receive grace and support in embracing this loving option.

## PRAYERS

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## REFLECTION

Mothers placing their children for adoption often face many challenges along the way. One of the greatest obstacles can be perceiving adoption as abandonment. But a mother who determines that making an adoption plan is best for her child isn't deserting her child. Rather, she is following the example of Christ's sacrificial love on the Cross in choosing a life-giving option that she has determined is ultimately in the best interest of her child, even at great cost to herself. The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that, in the face of fears and trials, we can "hold fast to the hope that lies before us. This we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm" (Heb 6:18-19). We pray that each expectant mother will be filled with "the peace of God that surpasses all understanding" (Phil 4:7) as she decides which life-giving option is best for her child. Let us all cling fast to the anchor of hope, for we have received "a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, 'Abba, Father!'" (Rom 8:15).

## ACTS OF REPARATION

(Choose one.)

- Do you have a sweet tooth? Or do you prefer salty snacks? Pick your favorite kind of treat, and give it up for the day.
- Look up one of the Scripture passages from today's reflection, and spend some time with it in prayer. What is the Lord saying to you?
- Offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for today's intention.

## ONE STEP FURTHER

"Accompanying Expectant Mothers Considering Adoption" suggests nine ways to offer ongoing support to a woman who is considering making an adoption plan for her preborn child ([respectlife.org/mothers-considering-adoption](https://respectlife.org/mothers-considering-adoption)). Many of the tips given are also helpful for supporting a friend who is experiencing a challenging or unexpected pregnancy, even if adoption has not been brought up. Supplemental resources regarding adoption can be found at [usccb.org/adoption-resources](https://usccb.org/adoption-resources).



## INTERCESSION

May all who support or participate in abortion experience a conversion of heart to seek and receive the Lord's boundless mercy.

## PRAYERS

Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be

## REFLECTION

When God fashioned the human person in His own image and likeness, He destined us for eternal life with Himself. Yet because of the sin of our first parents, death entered the world. The book of Genesis recounts the first occasion in which a person takes the life of another, as Cain violently kills his brother Abel. This instance of brother rising up against brother “at the very dawn of history is thus a sad witness of how evil spreads with amazing speed” (*Evangelium vitae* 8).

Since this time, disregard for human life has continued to spread. When we, like Cain, allow sin to find a place in our hearts, we become blinded to the truth. Sometimes this blindness might be so deep that we fail to recognize the undeniable humanity of preborn children. We may even tragically believe the lie that abortion is an act of compassion. But we know that “life, especially human life, belongs only to God: for this reason whoever attacks human life, in some way attacks God himself” (*EV* 9). Let us pray that all who support abortion will encounter the transforming love of the Father and, with repentant hearts, seek His mercy.

## ACTS OF REPARATION

(Choose one.)

- Smile. Ask God today for the grace to be extra joyful and to share the light of Christ with those most in need of His love and mercy.
- Make an act of faith, hope, or love ([uscgb.org/faith-hope-love](https://uscgb.org/faith-hope-love)).
- Offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for today's intention.

## ONE STEP FURTHER

*Evangelium vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*) was written to reaffirm the value and inviolability of every human life and to appeal to all people to respect, protect, love, and serve every human life. A brief summary highlights key themes and foundational teachings from the papal encyclical, exploring how the Church's teachings regarding human life are at the heart of Jesus' entire Gospel message ([respectlife.org/gospel-of-life-summary](https://respectlife.org/gospel-of-life-summary)).



## Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children

### DID YOU KNOW?

*"In all the Dioceses of the United States of America, January 22 (or January 23, when January 22 falls on a Sunday) shall be observed as a particular day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion" (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 373).*

More Information: [usccb.org/january-22](https://usccb.org/january-22)

### INTERCESSION

May all preborn children be protected in law and welcomed in love.

### PRAYERS

Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be

### REFLECTION

Today, we mourn the many children's lives ended by abortion and remember in prayer those who suffer the aftermath. We pray that children in their mothers' wombs would again be protected in law and do penance in reparation for abortions that have been committed in our world.

In his encyclical *Evangelium vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*), Pope John Paul II said, "may an impassioned plea rise to God, the Creator and lover of life, from every Christian community, from every group and association, from every family and from the heart of every believer" (EV 100). May that prayer arise in our hearts today and each day forward until every human being is protected in law and welcomed in love.

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### ACTS OF REPARATION

(Choose one.)

- Fast from one meal today.
- Offer this brief "Prayer for Life" for all preborn children whose lives are at risk. (The prayer is also available at [usccb.org/prayer-for-life](https://usccb.org/prayer-for-life).)

*Father and maker of all,  
you adorn all creation  
with splendor and beauty,  
and fashion human  
lives in your image and  
likeness.*

*Awaken in every heart  
reverence for the work of  
your hands, and renew  
among your people a*

*readiness to nurture and  
sustain your precious gift  
of life.*

*Grant this through our  
Lord Jesus Christ, your  
Son, who lives and reigns  
with you in the unity  
of the Holy Spirit, God  
forever and ever. Amen.*

- Offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for today's intention.

### ONE STEP FURTHER

More women and girls consider abortion than we may realize. They are our relatives and friends, people who work with us or for us. Even if someone identifies as being pro-life, the shock of an unexpected pregnancy, the devastation of a difficult prenatal diagnosis, shame, pressures, or fears may influence her to consider abortion.

If someone shared with you that she was pregnant and hadn't ruled out having an abortion, would you know how to respond in a loving way that is life-affirming for both her and her baby? Learn about the four steps of the L.O.V.E. Approach™\*: *Listen and Learn, Open Options, Vision and Value, and Extend and Empower* ([respectlife.org/l-o-v-e](https://respectlife.org/l-o-v-e)).

\*The L.O.V.E. Approach™ is trademarked by Heartbeat International, Inc. and may not be adapted or modified. The L.O.V.E. Approach™ is used in "What to Do When a Friend Is Considering Abortion" with permission from Heartbeat International, Inc.



## INTERCESSION

May civic leaders work for the protection of all human life, in every stage and circumstance.

## PRAYERS

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## REFLECTION

The Declaration of Independence boldly affirms that first among our inalienable rights is the right to life, given to us by the Creator. Yet despite being so solemnly proclaimed, the right to life is today threatened and often denied, particularly at the moments when life is most fragile. Our laws should—first and foremost—protect life. Even with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, many states still do not recognize children in their mothers' wombs as persons and still claim that abortion is a right. Further, many political leaders work actively to increase access to abortion. Some falsely describe it as health care and even as a basic human right. Laws and policies that legalize or promote an intrinsic evil like abortion violate the virtue of justice.

Those who work as public officials and civic leaders have a duty to serve the common good, and therefore have a profound obligation to safeguard this most fundamental right to life. Through our own prayer, witness, and civic participation, we can encourage our leaders to truly answer their call to protect the rights of all people. For “there can be no true democracy without a recognition of every person’s dignity and without respect for his or her rights” (*Evangelium vitae* 101).

<sup>1</sup> *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States*, Introductory Note. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2023.

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## ACTS OF REPARATION

(Choose one.)

- Sacrifice some of your free time to do a small act of service, such as making breakfast for a family member, writing a note of encouragement to a coworker, or praying for the intentions of a friend.
- Sometimes restrictions on religious freedom constrain our efforts to live out the Gospel of life. We must be free to live out our Catholic faith in the public square. Offer this Prayer for Religious Liberty, that Christians may always be free to respect, protect, and defend human life: [uscgb.org/prayer-for-religious-liberty](https://uscgb.org/prayer-for-religious-liberty).
- Offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for today’s intention.

## ONE STEP FURTHER

When discussing the political responsibility of Catholics, the U.S. bishops have repeatedly affirmed, “the threat of abortion remains our pre-eminent priority.”<sup>1</sup> Abortion directly attacks life itself, takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and destroys over a million lives annually in the United States. Learn more in “Priorities at the Polls”: [respectlife.org/priorities-at-the-polls](https://respectlife.org/priorities-at-the-polls).



## INTERCESSION

May all who defend life find strength and renewal in the Holy Spirit.

## PRAYERS

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## REFLECTION

God has carefully, tenderly created every person in His own image and likeness, to be in a loving relationship with Himself. From each tiny child knit within a mother's womb, to every person approaching death, all are loved perfectly and completely by God: "It is therefore a service of love which we are all committed to ensure to our neighbor, that his or her life may be always defended and promoted, *especially when it is weak or threatened* [emphasis added]" (*Evangelium vitae* 77).

In a world in which those who are most vulnerable are so often overlooked and disregarded, Christ calls us to embrace and uphold the unconditional dignity of every human life. In answering this call, we help to build "a new culture of life, the fruit of the culture of truth and of love" (EV 77). May the Holy Spirit continually renew us as we strive to faithfully defend God's gift of life.

## ACTS OF REPARATION

(Choose one.)

- Do you love your cup of coffee? Abstain from caffeine today, or try your coffee black.
- "Unplug" for some time today, and reflect on how God may be asking you to help build a culture of life in your home, workplace, or Church community.
- Offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for today's intention.

## ONE STEP FURTHER

Watching the news and reading headlines, we may often feel helpless in the face of heartbreaking lack of respect for human life. When our efforts to make a difference feel small, it's important to remember that changing the culture is a process of conversion that begins in our own hearts. It includes a willingness to be instructed by the Holy Spirit and a desire to be close to Jesus—the source of joy and love. "How to Build a Culture of Life" briefly explains where to start: [respectlife.org/culture-of-life](https://respectlife.org/culture-of-life).





Where Life Begins and Love NEVER Ends!

