

## US Conference of Bishops: October is “Respect Life Month”

### October Kicks Off 2017-18 Pro-Life Year

The U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference (USCCB) has approved the theme for this year: **Be Not Afraid. Our God has won the battle over death.** We can act and speak in truth, urging everyone to respect and preserve life from conception to natural death.

Many activities are being planned for the coming months by Catholic communities across the nation. We Catholics are being urged to be not afraid to participate and do what we can at the local level. Here are just a few opportunities:

■ **LIFE CHAIN** on October 1<sup>st</sup> is a peaceful and prayerful public witness of pro-life individuals standing for 90 minutes praying for our nation & for an end to abortion. It is a visual statement of solidarity by the Christian community that abortion kills children & that the Church supports the sanctity of human life. Why not look up your local event and join in?

■ From Sept. 27 to Nov. 5, there will be **40 DAYS FOR LIFE** daily prayer vigils around the world outside of Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers. Please join your area group to pray the rosary or hold signs for all to see. Your gift of just **an hour or more of peaceful witness** and prayer any day between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. will help to save God’s children in danger of abortion. Do something beautiful for Him, and sign up for any hour(s) you can give. Just imagine how wonderful you will feel to find out that you may have helped to save a child’s life!

■ Many parishes will be sponsoring **“BABY SHOWERS”** to raise funds and collect baby items for use by mothers and their babies in places such as Good Counsel Homes, and Several Sources. Look up & participate in your local event.

■ Help get the word out to those emotionally hurt from having an abortion. **PROJECT RACHEL**, the Catholic Church's ministry to those who have had or facilitated an abortion, is a diocesan-based network of specially trained persons who provide a team response of **care for those suffering from abortion’s aftermath**. Besides referral for Sacramental Reconciliation, the ministry provides a network of services, including pastoral counseling, support groups, retreats & referrals to licensed mental health professionals. Confidential non-judgmental help is available by calling the national toll-free number: 1-888-456-HOPE (-4673) or visit [HopeAfterAbortion.org](http://HopeAfterAbortion.org).

### Cardinal Dolan: Every Person is Sacred

(Chairman, USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities)

God made each of us in his own image and likeness. He desires to be united with us forever in a loving relationship. **God loves us, treats us with respect, and asks us to do the same with others.** Every person is sacred and must be treated with the dignity they deserve. No one should ever be treated callously or carelessly—everyone should be cherished and protected!

From each tiny child waiting to be born, to individuals nearing death, all are precious and deserve our care and protection. Women and men suffering after abortion, individuals tempted to end their lives, couples longing to conceive a child, people pushed to the margins of society by a "throwaway culture," expectant mothers facing challenging pregnancies, and every other person—each "has a place in God's heart from all eternity" (*Amoris Laetitia*, 168).

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The defense of life is a commitment that pertains not only to private morality, but is also a social and political issue. The triumph of truth and life already belongs to the history of salvation. It is the responsibility of all the forces committed to the respect of human dignity to inscribe it in the history of humanity.

**St. John Paul II**

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### Forced by Her Employer!

Cathy Cenzone-DeCarlo, RN, was forced by her employer in New York to participate in a late-term abortion against her deeply-held pro-life beliefs. This was clearly a **violation of her conscience rights!** She is deeply against the bloody dismemberment procedure and then being forced to account for a baby’s body parts.

Federal legislation has been introduced to make more effective and permanent the protections of the Hyde/Weldon conscience amendment approved every year since 2004. It would also ensure that victims of discrimination have a right of court action to protect their basic right of conscience.

The legislation is called the **Conscience Protection Act of 2017**. Last year it was passed by the House on a strong bi-partisan vote, and is in the Senate’s hands. All concerned readers are encouraged to contact their Senators asking for their support. An easy way to do this is to send emails to your representatives through [www.HumanLifeAction.org](http://www.HumanLifeAction.org)

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## Does Your Child's College Unjustly Target Pro-Life Students?

Students can face discrimination for trying to protect unborn babies and moms from abortion.

In January, pro-life students filed a lawsuit against **Queens College (NY)** after it denied their Students for Life club official recognition.

In March, a pro-life student club sought legal help after **Kutztown University (PA)** officials scrubbed their chalked pro-life messages from campus sidewalks. The college permitted other groups to write sidewalk chalk messages.

Then in April, a student Republicans club at **Hood College (MD)** found out that it may be punished for setting up a display with pro-life messages. The display included a poster of a black toddler and the words, "... abortion is the number one killer of black lives in the United States."

Pro-lifers frequently deal with vandalism on campus, too. In April, in two separate incidents, students tried to destroy pro-life displays at **Texas State University & Washington State University**. And in March, a pro-life student display at the **University of Colorado** at Boulder was vandalized.

In May, another group of pro-life students at **Fresno State University** filed a lawsuit against a professor after he was caught on video instructing his students to deface and erase the pro-life group's sidewalk chalk messages. [Mic. Bilger, University Votes to Ban Pro-Life Club, Says Pro-Life Students are "an Embarrassment," *LifeNews*, 8/28/2017.]

Of all places, colleges and universities should be places where various viewpoints can be expressed peacefully and in good conscience. If you hear of any similar harassment, you should report it to the appropriate college authority.

## Is "Human Life" the Same as "Human Dignity"?

For the Church, there is no distinction between defending human life and promoting the dignity of the human person.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI writes in *Caritas in Veritate* (no. 15): "The Church forcefully maintains this link between life ethics and social ethics, fully aware that a society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which **human life is devalued and violated**, especially where it is weak or marginalized."

IN THE NETHERLANDS, REQUESTS FOR "HASTENED DEATH" WERE WITHDRAWN BY **85%** OF PATIENTS WHEN THEIR SYMPTOMS WERE BETTER CONTROLLED.



As a gift from God, every human life is sacred from conception to natural death. The life and dignity of every person must be respected and protected at every stage and in every condition. The **right to life is the first and most fundamental** principle of human rights that leads Catholics to actively work for a world of greater respect for human life, greater commitment to justice and peace. [www.USCCB.org]

## "Let's Experiment on Human Embryos, Then Destroy Them When We're Done"

Researchers in Oregon have announced that they have successfully altered genes in a human embryo for the first time in the U.S. While researchers laud the breakthrough as a step towards **genetically modified humans** and the potential ability to treat inherited genetic diseases, the embryonic humans created and tested in both U.S. and Chinese experiments were all destroyed within a few days.

"Very young humans have been created in vitro and treated not as ends, but as mere means or **research fodder** to achieve particular investigative goals," said Fr. Tadeusz Pacholczyk of the **National Catholic Bioethics Center**. "Their value as human beings is profoundly denigrated every time they are created, experimented upon, and then killed. Moreover, if such embryos were to grow up, as will doubtless occur in the future, there are likely to be unintended effects from modifying their genes."

A 2017 report from the **National Academies of Sciences** points out that this kind of gene editing is controversial "precisely because the resulting genetic changes would be inherited by the next generation, and the technology therefore would cross a line many have viewed as ethically inviolable." Fr. Tad also stressed limiting gene editing to therapeutic purposes, with the subject's best interests in mind, for treating difficult disorders such as **sickle cell disease and cancer**.

"These experiments were not therapeutic, as the goal was ultimately to destroy the embryos," Father Tad said. "Consent is particularly important when dealing with vulnerable research subjects, and human **embryos are among the most vulnerable** of God's creatures." The Food & Drug Administration requires that all embryos who experience gene editing must be destroyed. [Excerpted from "Amid Human Embryo Gene Editing in Oregon, Ethicists Say Procedure Is Immoral" by Adelaide Mena/CNA/EWTN News, 8/2/2017]