



Department of Pro-Life Activities *Diocese of Buffalo*



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Mission Statement

The Office of Pro-Life Activities was founded in December of 1975 by the most Reverend Edward D. Head, D.D. and coordinates endeavors of the >Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities authored by the USCCB (United States Catholic Conference Bishops), activating the Church, its people and its institutions in a 4-pronged program in defense of human life through education, pastoral care, public policy and prayer. All activities are legal and subject to the approval of church guidelines.

- **Public Information:** Educate both the Catholic Community and the public at large about pro-life issues.
- **Pastoral Care:** Provide spiritual/material support for those in need.
- **Public Policy:** A Legislative efforts directed to ensure effective legal protection for all human life.
- **Prayer & Worship:** directed to participation in the sacramental life of the church and in programs of communal and individual prayer.

Implementing the Pro-Life Program

Restoring respect for human life in our society is an essential task of the Church that extends through all its institutions, agencies, and organizations and embraces diverse tasks and goals. The following schema suggests a model for organizing and allocating the Church's resources of people, services, institutions, and finances at various levels to help restore and advance protection in law for unborn children's right to life and to foster a true culture of life.

The Office of Pro-Life Activities maintains a network of chairpersons and committees throughout the parishes and vicariates of the Diocese of Buffalo. A variety of programs and events are sponsored by this office to support the objectives of the Pastoral Plan and a consistent effort is made to provide resources and background information on the medical, moral and legal aspects of human life issues.

We invite you to become Apostles for the Gospel of Life by becoming involved in the Respect Life Program of the Diocese of Buffalo.

State Coordinating Committee: New York State Catholic Conference Provide overall coordination in each state on matters concerning public policy.

Diocesan Pro-Life Director

The diocesan pro-life director coordinates activities of the pastoral plan within the diocese. The director, will receive information and guidance from the national episcopal conference's Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities and from the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment.

The diocesan director is a person appointed by and responsible to the diocesan bishop.

The diocesan pro-life director's objectives are to

- direct and coordinate the diocesan and parish pro-life information and educational program, providing appropriate resources as necessary
- provide educational opportunities and time for sharing program information among members of parish pro-life committees
- support local programs that counsel and assist women with problems related to pregnancy; promote establishment of new programs where needed
- encourage and support a diocese-wide post-abortion ministry
- encourage and support local programs that provide care for the dying
- encourage and coordinate programs of prayer and worship that focus on the sanctity of all human life
- maintain working relationships with local pro-life groups and encourage the development of local pro-life lobbying networks
- maintain a local public information program that monitors print and broadcast media's treatment of pro-life issues, and prepare appropriate responses
- undertake, depending on financial resources, appropriate public advertising campaigns
- develop responsible and effective communications with each elected representative: getting to know them personally through one-on-one visits, telephone calls, letters, and e-mail
- maintain communications with the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities and with the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment
- report periodically to the diocesan bishop on the status of implementation of the pastoral plan

Parish Pro-Life Committee

The parish pro-life committee is directed by the respect life coordinator. They assist 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.

The parish respect life coordinator of the parish committee is appointed by the pastor, recruits volunteers to help meet the needs the committee serves.

The parish respect life coordinator relies on the diocesan pro-life director 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 objectives of the parish pro-life committee are to

- coordinate parish implementation of the annual Respect Life Program, promoting it to agencies and organizations in the parishes, especially schools and religious education programs; and encourage parish discussion groups to use the program as a basis for their discussions
- promote and assist pregnancy counseling and comprehensive maternity support services, as well as post-abortion counseling and reconciliation programs, and make these well known in the parish and local community

- develop or adopt, where feasible, a parish-based ministry to pregnant women and their children
- encourage and support parishioners' involvement in services to help those who are chronically ill, disabled, or dying and their families
- sponsor programs of prayer in the parish to pray for mothers and their unborn children, for those who are dying, for those who are disabled, for prisoners on death row and those they have harmed, and indeed for all who are in need, that the culture of death that surrounds us may be replaced by a culture of life
- foster awareness of the need to restore legal protection to the lives of unborn children to the maximum degree possible and to safeguard in law the lives of those who are chronically ill, disabled, or dying
- keep parishioners informed of upcoming important legislation; and, at the direction of the diocesan pro-life director, organize letter-writing, postcard campaigns, or similar appropriate activities when important votes are expected

May the "people of life" constantly grow in number and may a new culture of love and solidarity develop for the true good of the whole of human society.

-Pope John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life*, no. 101

“Among important issues involving the dignity of human life with which the Church is concerned, abortion necessarily plays a central role. Abortion, the direct killing of an innocent human being, is always gravely immoral (*The Gospel of Life*, no. 57); its victims are the most vulnerable and defenseless members of the human family. It is imperative that those who are called to serve the least among us give urgent attention and priority to this issue of justice.”

~USCCB Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities

