



Office for
Human Life
Catholic Diocese
of Cleveland

RESPECT LIFE MONTH 2026

INFINITE DIGNITY

Seeing Life Through Mary's Eyes



PARISH LEADER TOOLKIT

A practical guide for parishes, schools, families, and ministries participating in Respect Life Month 2026 in the Diocese of Cleveland.

This year's Respect Life Month theme, “**Mary, Mother of Life**,” invites us to contemplate the gift of every human person through the framework of *Dignitas Infinita*, the Vatican's 2024 declaration on human dignity. Throughout October, participants will journey through four dimensions of human dignity and explore concrete life and justice issues that challenge us to build a culture of life and civilization of love.

THE WEEKLY JOURNEY

1 ONTOLOGICAL DIGNITY

Created, Willed, and Loved by God

SPOTLIGHT

Abortion

2 MORAL DIGNITY

Saying Yes with Mary

SPOTLIGHT

Human Trafficking

3 SOCIAL DIGNITY

Dignity in Community

SPOTLIGHT

Poverty & Immigration

4 EXISTENTIAL DIGNITY

Mary at the Foot of the Cross

SPOTLIGHT

End-of-Life Care & Assisted Suicide

“Mary, Mother of all Life, *pray for us!*”





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Infinite Dignity:

Seeing Life Through Mary's Eyes



2026 Respect Life Month
At a Glance

Purpose of Tool Kit

This year, as the Church in the United States celebrates Respect Life Month under the theme, “**Mary, Mother of Life,**” the Office for Human Life of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland invites parishes to reflect more deeply on the gift and dignity of every human person through the lens of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith’s declaration, ***Dignitas Infinita***, on Human Dignity (promulgated in 2024).

Invitations to Participate

During each week of October, we invite you to the following:

- ☒ **Include the weekly intercession in the Prayers of the Faithful**
- ☒ **Share the Bulletin/Pulpit Announcement**
- ☒ **Distribute the weekly Dignity Focus Handout in the Bulletin**
- ☒ **Post the Weekly Social Media Graphic**
- ☒ **Promote Service & Advocacy Opportunities**

**FOR A ROBUST &
COMPREHENSIVE
RESPECT LIFE
MONTH, TRY TO
ENGAGE WITH AT
LEAST ONE
RESOURCE FROM
EACH PILLAR!**

Monthly Goal:

Throughout October, our resources will connect the four facets of dignity with Marian reflections and litanies that present Mary as a model of welcome, accomplishment, hope, and reverence for life. The primary goal of these materials is to help Catholics—and all people of good will—see more clearly the many life and dignity issues present in our world today. By growing in our awareness of both the God-given dignity of every person and the threats that obscure that dignity, we prepare ourselves for the next step of faithful discipleship: prayerful discernment. In this way, our hope and prayer is that Respect Life Month becomes a foundation for our local Church’s observance of **Catholic Social Teaching Month in November**, when we will be invited to more intentionally discern, judge, and respond to these realities in the light of the Gospel and the Church’s Social Doctrine.

October: See

Recognize human dignity and threats to it.



November: Discern

Apply Catholic Social Teaching to concrete situations and actions.

CREATED, WILLED, AND LOVED BY GOD

PARISH LEADER OVERVIEW



THEME

Every human person is created, willed, and loved by God and possesses an inherent dignity that can never be lost. This week invites us to reflect on this dignity, learn about the realities surrounding abortion, accompany mothers and families, pray for healing, and help build a culture in which every life is welcomed and protected.



GOAL OF THE WEEK

Through prayer, education, service, and advocacy, help parishioners respond to abortion and its effects with truth, compassion, and hope—grounded in the inherent dignity of every person.



CRUNCHED FOR TIME?

START HERE.

Begin with these simple actions:

1. Include this week's intercession during the Prayers of the Faithful during liturgy.
2. Share this week's bulletin/pulpit announcement.
3. Include the **Ontological Dignity** handout in this week's parish bulletin.
4. Share the QR code for the Office for Human Life's monthly newsletter to highlight service opportunities.
5. Post this week's social media graphic on your parish social channels.



ALL RESOURCES CAN BE
FOUND OUR WEBPAGE!



PILLAR RESOURCES:

For a robust and comprehensive Respect Life Month Implementation we invite you to include one resource from each pro-life pillar to share with your community:



PRAY Resources (choose 1)

- Prayer to St. Joseph, Defender of Life
- Litany to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Life
- Rosary for Life: Sorrowful Mysteries
- Respect Life Sunday Homily Helps



LEARN Resources (choose 1)

- 2025 Ohio Abortion Report (*local perspective*)
- What are abortion pills? (*current issue*)
- Poverty & Abortion (*social justice perspective*)
- Hope after Abortion (*healing perspective*)



SERVE Resources (choose 1)

- Choose one local maternity home to support
- Choose one local pregnancy resource center to support
- Highlight WWMIN/Gabriel Project Ministry



ADVOCATE Resources (choose 1)

- Participate in the USCCB's Respect Life & Action campaign: "Stop the sale of abortion pills"
- Participate in the CCO's Action Alert: "No State-Funded Death"



SAYING 'YES' WITH MARY

PARISH LEADER OVERVIEW



THEME

This week invites the us to reflect on how human freedom can either honor or obscure dignity, learn about the reality of human trafficking, accompany those who are vulnerable and exploited, pray for healing and restoration, and help build a culture that recognizes and protects the dignity of every person.



GOAL OF THE WEEK

Help parishioners respond to human trafficking and the exploitation of vulnerable persons with truth, compassion, and hope.



CRUNCHED FOR TIME?

START HERE.

Begin with these simple actions:

1. Include this week's intercession during the Prayers of the Faithful during liturgy.
2. Share this week's bulletin/pulpit announcement.
3. Include the **Moral Dignity** handout in this week's parish bulletin.
4. Share the QR code for the Office for Human Life's monthly newsletter to highlight service opportunities.
5. Post this week's social media graphic on your parish social channels.

ALL RESOURCES CAN BE
FOUND OUR WEBPAGE!



PILLAR RESOURCES:

For a robust and comprehensive Respect Life Month Implementation we invite you to include one resource from each pro-life pillar to share with your community:



PRAY Resources (choose 1)

- Prayer to St. Josephine Bakhita
- Homily of Pope Francis: "Visit to Lampedusa"
- Fulton Sheen, "When Freedom and Love..."
- 28th Sunday of Ordinary Time Homily Helps



LEARN Resources (choose 1)

- Human Trafficking Handout (*spotlight issue*)
- "Everyday Products..." (*social justice perspective*)
- Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking (*Vatican publication*)



SERVE Resources (choose 1)

- Contact [Catholic Charities](#) to find out more about how they are serving vulnerable populations
- Support [Teleios](#) and/or [Harriett Tubman Movement](#) (local H.T. advocates)



ADVOCATE Resources (choose 1)

- Participate in the USCCB's Respect Life & Action campaign: "Stop the sale of abortion pills"
- Participate in the CCO's Action Alert: "No State-Funded Death"



DIGNITY IN COMMUNITY

PARISH LEADER OVERVIEW



THEME

This week invites us to reflect on the social dimension of human dignity and our responsibility to build communities where every person can flourish. Through the spotlight issues of poverty and immigration, we are called to recognize Christ in those who experience hardship, displacement, and exclusion.



GOAL OF THE WEEK

Help parishioners recognize that human dignity is not only personal but social, inspiring a response to poverty and immigration with solidarity, charity, and a commitment to the common good.



CRUNCHED FOR TIME?

START HERE.

Begin with these simple actions:

1. Include this week's intercession during the Prayers of the Faithful during liturgy.
2. Share this week's bulletin/pulpit announcement.
3. Include the **Social Dignity** handout in this week's parish bulletin.
4. Share the QR code for the Office for Human Life's monthly newsletter to highlight service opportunities.
5. Post this week's social media graphic on your parish social channels.



ALL RESOURCES CAN BE
FOUND ON OUR WEBPAGE!



PILLAR RESOURCES:

For a robust and comprehensive Respect Life Month Implementation we invite you to include one resource from each pro-life pillar to share with your community:



PRAY Resources (choose 1)

- Host a "Honoring Many Journeys.." Prayer Service
- Homily of Pope Francis: "Visit to Lampedusa"
- St. Caesarius of Arles, "Divine & Human Mercy"
- 29th Sunday of Ordinary Time Homily Helps



LEARN Resources (choose 1)

- "Poverty in the Diocese" (*local perspective*)
- "Trends in Forced Displacement" (*global lens*)
- Migration & CST (USCCB publication)
- Synthesis of Dilexi Te (*social justice perspective*)



SERVE Resources (choose 1)

- Contact Catholic Charities to find out more about how they are serving vulnerable populations
- Support Refugee Resource Center (housed at St. Coleman's Parish)
- Donate to diocesan Immigrant Assistance Fund



ADVOCATE Resources (choose 1)

- Sign the USCCB's Cabrini Pledge
- Study CLINIC's Parish Toolkit: Supporting Immigrants in a Time of Need and work on implementing as a parish.



MARY AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

PARISH LEADER OVERVIEW

THEME

This week invites us to reflect on the enduring dignity of every human person, especially in the face of suffering. Through the spotlight issues of end-of-life care and assisted suicide, we are called to accompany those who are suffering with compassion, affirm the sacredness of every life until natural death, and help build a culture that responds to vulnerability with love, hope, and authentic care.

GOAL OF THE WEEK

Help parishioners recognize the inherent dignity of every person at every stage of life and respond to suffering, serious illness, and end-of-life challenges with compassion, accompaniment, and respect for life until natural death.

CRUNCHED FOR TIME?

START HERE.

Begin with these simple actions:

1. Include this week's intercession during the Prayers of the Faithful during liturgy.
2. Share this week's bulletin/pulpit announcement.
3. Include the **Existential Dignity** handout in this week's parish bulletin.
4. Share the QR code for the Office for Human Life's monthly newsletter to highlight service opportunities.
5. Post this week's social media graphic on your parish social channels.



ALL RESOURCES CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBPAGE!



PILLAR RESOURCES:

For a robust and comprehensive Respect Life Month Implementation we invite you to include one resource from each pro-life pillar to share with your community:



PRAY Resources (choose 1)

- "Contemplating Christ's Passion with Mary"
- Litany to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Life
- Rosary for Life: Sorrowful Mysteries
- 30th Sunday of Ordinary Time Homily Helps



LEARN Resources (choose 1)

- "Realities in USA & Canada" (fact sheet)
- "Palliative Care vs. Assisted Suicide" (current issue)
- Chapter summaries of S.B. (CST perspective)
- "Top Reasons to Oppose P.A.S." (USCCB)



SERVE Resources (choose 1)

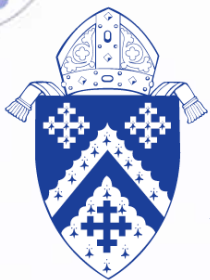
- Create an Advanced Medical Directives plan for you and/or your loved ones.
- Contact Catholic Charities to find out more about how they are serving the sick and the dying.



ADVOCATE Resources (choose 1)

- Participate in the USCCB's Respect Life & Action campaign: "Stop the sale of abortion pills"
- Participate in the CCO's Action Alert: "No State-Funded Death"





Office for
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Week 1:

Created, Willed, and Loved by God



Human Dignity Focus:
Ontological Dignity



From the Litany

“Mary, Mother of all Life, help us to respect human life from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death.”



Core Message

Before we do anything, achieve anything, or choose anything, we are loved into existence by God. Human dignity is not earned—it is received.



Pastoral Emphasis

Move from seeing dignity as earned to recognizing it as a gift from God.



Questions for Reflection:

Do I truly believe that every person—including myself—has dignity simply because they are created, willed, and loved by God?

What assumptions or attitudes prevent me from recognizing the God-given dignity of every human life?

How can I better affirm and protect the dignity of those who are most vulnerable in our community?



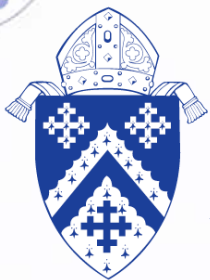
Spotlight Issue: Abortion

The clearest example of ontological dignity. The question is fundamentally: Does every human being possess dignity simply because he or she exists? This week establishes the foundation upon which all the others rest.



Marian Dimension

Mary first receives life. Her motherhood reminds us that every human person begins as a gift entrusted to others.



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Week 2: Saying Yes with Mary to the Dignity of Others



Human Dignity Focus:
Moral Dignity



From the Litany

“Mary, Full of Grace, You had a choice in responding to God’s call; Help us always to say “Yes” to the will of God in our lives, And strive always to do whatever he tells us.”



Core Message

Human dignity calls for a response. We are free, and our choices either reveal or obscure the dignity that God has given us.



Pastoral Emphasis

Move from recognizing human dignity to choosing actions that honor and protect it.



Questions for Reflection:

How do my daily choices reveal (or obscure) the dignity that God has given me and others?
Where is God inviting me to deeper conversion in the way I speak, act, or treat others?
How can I more intentionally choose life, love, and human flourishing in the ordinary circumstances of my life?



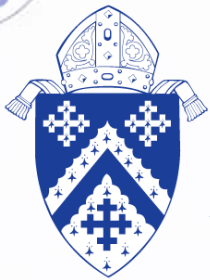
Spotlight Issue: Human Trafficking

Trafficking vividly demonstrates moral dignity because it involves choices that deny another person's humanity. It also highlights the call to conversion and the responsibility to choose the good.



Marian Dimension

Mary's “fiat” becomes the model of authentic freedom. True freedom is not doing whatever we want; it is choosing the good.



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Week 3:

Dignity in Community



Human Dignity Focus:
Social Dignity



From the Litany

“Mary, Intercessor and Advocate, We lift up the poor, the displaced, the marginalized and vulnerable members of society; Help them to never abandon hope, but to place their trust in the God who gave them life.”



Core Message

If every person possesses dignity, society must be organized in ways that honor that dignity.



Pastoral Emphasis

Move from personal concern for human dignity to a commitment to the common good.



Questions for Reflection:

Who in my parish, neighborhood, workplace, or community is most at risk of being overlooked or forgotten?

What social, economic, cultural, or political realities prevent some people from living in a manner consistent with their dignity?

How is God calling me and our community to accompany, advocate for, and stand in solidarity with the poor and the vulnerable?



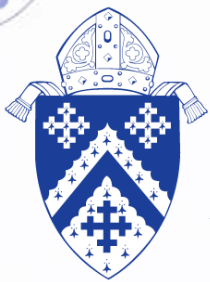
Spotlight Issues: Poverty & Migration

These are social dignity issues par excellence because they focus on conditions that prevent people from flourishing according to their God-given dignity. The two are also deeply relevant in Catholic Social Teaching.



Marian Dimension

Mary's *Magnificat* highlights God's concern for the lowly, forgotten, and vulnerable.



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Week 4:

Mary at the Foot of the Cross



Human Dignity Focus:
Existential Dignity



From the Litany

“Mary, Mother of Sorrows, Simeon’s prophecy foretold that a sword of suffering would pierce your heart; Bring comfort and hope to all mothers who suffer over their children.”



Core Message

Even when suffering, illness, addiction, loneliness, or grief make life feel undignified, our God-given dignity remains.



Pastoral Emphasis

Learn to recognize and accompany Christ in those who suffer.



Questions for Reflection:

Where do I encounter suffering, loneliness, grief, illness, or despair in my own life or in the lives of others?

How does Christ’s presence--and Mary’s faithful accompaniment--help me see dignity even in moments of suffering?

How can I bring comfort, hope, and compassionate presence to those who are carrying heavy burdens?



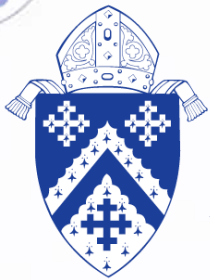
Spotlight Issues: End-of-Life Care & Assisted-Suicide

Existential dignity asks whether suffering diminishes human worth. This week becomes a powerful witness that dignity remains even amid illness, dependence, grief, and suffering.



Marian Dimension

Mary stands at Calvary. She remains steadfast, present, and faithful even when suffering cannot be removed.



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RLM 2026

Quick Access Resource Hub



Access all 4 “Facets of Human Dignity” Handouts

Link gives you viewing access to **Ontological Dignity** (Week 1), **Moral Dignity** (Week 2), **Social Dignity** (Week 3), and **Existential Dignity** (Week 4). Easy to print and put into weekly parish bulletins.



Access all 4 Weekly Social Media Graphics

Link gives you viewing access to each week's social media graphic that you can post onto your social channels. These will also be shared on the **diocesan Catholic Social Media platform**, with pre-made, copy & paste captions. Be sure to use the hashtags **#humanlifecle** and **#RLMCLE2026**



Access Weekly Intercessions and Bulletin Blurbs

Link gives you viewing access to each week's intercessions for **Prayers of the Faithful**, as well as ready-made bulletin/pulpit announcements.



Access to Office for Human Life Newsletter

Consider subscribing to our **twice-monthly newsletter** to stay informed about opportunities to PRAY, LEARN, SERVE, and ADVOCATE throughout the Diocese of Cleveland. Scan the QR code and select “Human Life” from the subscription options.



Access the National (USCCB) Respect Life Month Resources

Link takes you to the **National Respect Life Month** page, where you can access the **Litany to the Blessed Virgin Mary** and other resources. If your parish/community would like hard copies of the Litany, or RLM posters, please contact our Office and we can send you some!



May Our Lady of
Sorrows
intercede for all
LIFE,
from conception to
natural death.