



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

Parochial Self-Assessment: Implementation of Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities

In 1995, Pope St. John Paul II's encyclical, entitled *Evangelium Vitae*, called upon all the resources of the Church—its people, services, and institutions—to pursue pro-life efforts with renewed energy and commitment in four major areas: Prayer and Worship, Public Information and Education, Pastoral Care, and Public Policy Advocacy.

This self-assessment is meant to evaluate the success of and dedication to fulfilling the Holy Father's call to action.

How do we PRAY? (In what ways does our parish "storm Heaven"—and encourage our faithful to do so—in defense against the Culture of Death?)

How do we EDUCATE? (What efforts do we undertake to deepen respect for human life and heighten public opposition to life issues—BOTH in the Catholic community we serve, AND for the general public?)

How do we ACT? (What pastoral care efforts do we initiate and what pro-life action groups/agencies do we support and participate in to support life?)

How do we ADVOCATE? (How do we fulfill our responsibility of cooperation and collaboration with advocacy efforts by citizens at all levels to achieve both the long- and short-term goals of a comprehensive pro-life public policy program?)

Additional Ideas for Pro-Life Activism in Parish Communities

Prayer and Worship

- Do the General Intercessions at Mass regularly include petitions to foster respect for all life, especially the unborn?
- Do we have a pro-life liturgy on Respect Life Sunday (the first Sunday in October)?
- Do we have pro-life liturgies on other Sundays throughout the year with appropriate themes to foster a greater respect for life?
- Do we have special prayer services including Eucharistic Adoration to intercede for those affected by abortion and assisted suicide?
- Do we participate in 40 Days for Life or the annual Life Chain in our area? Do we organize rosaries for life in our parish?
- Do we have other programs such as spiritual adoption or other ideas listed under the Parish Life Leader Resource on the Respect Life Office website (www.lifeofficenyc.org)?
- Does our parish incorporate life themes in our parish missions and liturgical calendar (e.g., mercy theme for post-abortion healing)?

Public Information and Education

- Are there pro-life homilies several times throughout the year, including Respect Life Sunday and the Sunday before January 22, the anniversary of the legalization of abortion in the United States?
- Do we invite speakers on life issues to share their testimony at the end of Mass or at another appropriate time (e.g., a post-abortion testimony, couple with adverse prenatal diagnosis)?
- Do we have regular or frequent pro-life bulletin announcements?
- Do we have information about pro-life activities in the parish vestibules?
- Does our parish school have an educational program that promotes pro-life awareness and chastity? Does our school participate in the Archdiocesan Respect Life Week in January?
- Do we have adult educational programs on pro-life topics?
- Does our catechism and RCIA formation cover pro-life issues? Are our DREs and Catechists formed in pro-life issues? Do they know about the Archdiocesan Respect Life Curriculum?
- Are these programs publicized in the community?

Pastoral Care

- Do we have a method of seeking out distressed pregnant women and learning of their needs?
- Does my parish have an Archdiocesan Crisis-Pregnancy/Post-Abortion resource poster at the doors of the Church and other visible places within the parish?
- Do my priests have post-abortion healing resource palm cards in the confessional for penitents?
- Can pregnant women get help with counseling, support, medical help, clothing or housing?
- Does the parish support the local crisis pregnancy center and maternity home with financial aid, volunteer recruitment, clothing, and equipment collections?
- Are the services of the local crisis pregnancy centers and maternity home publicized (e.g., Sisters of Life, Birthright, CareNet)?
- Do we know about post-abortion ministries in our Archdiocese? Do we advertise and refer people to it?
- Are the needs of the disabled, dying, and elderly addressed/met?

Public Policy Advocacy

- Do we promote letter-writing and petitions to public officials in support of or opposed to pro-life issues?
- Does the parish participate in pro-life activities such as the pro-life prayer vigils and the March for Life?
- Do we have a program to promote and assist in voter registration?
- Do we publicly commemorate January 22?
- Do we monitor the media and respond to attacks on the sanctity of life through letters to the editor or phone calls to radio and TV stations?