



DIocese of Youngstown

January 10, 2022

Dear Reverend Clergy, Religious, Seminarians, Staff and Faithful of the Diocese of Youngstown,

On January 22, 2022, the Church in the United States observes a Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children. In the Collect at Holy Mass for this special day we find these words, “God our Creator, we give thanks to you, who alone have the power to impart the breath of life as you form each of us in our mother’s womb; grant we pray, that we whom you have made stewards of creation, may remain faithful to this sacred trust and constant in safeguarding the dignity of every human life.”

Indeed, God alone engenders the gift of life. As a Church we steadfastly believe that this life begins in the mother’s womb at conception and therefore is sacred. As Catholics it is incumbent for all of us to protect and defend this life and to pray daily for an end to abortion. There is no justifiable reason or cause for an abortion. And yet, every year, thousands of lives are aborted in our country. We cannot afford to be selective or dismissive about this sacred gift of life that comes from God.

I invite you to join me to pray for an end to abortion and a greater appreciation of life from conception to natural death. This year, I am celebrating two diocesan Masses for Life: on Tuesday, January 18, at 6:30pm in the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Chapel of Walsh University in North Canton, and on Sunday, January 23, at 4:00pm in Saint Columba Cathedral. If you are or were unable to attend these Masses, I ask that you designate a day to attend Mass to pray for life and an end to abortion.

As the Collect for the special Mass intimates, we also have a responsibility to safeguard and protect the dignity of every human life. In this time of pandemic, it is imperative that we all do our part to protect one another by becoming vaccinated. Consistent with previous teaching of the Church, Vatican authorities have examined the moral implications of the available vaccines and have determined that they are not only permissible to use, but also an act of moral responsibility. Pope Francis has stated that getting vaccinated is “an act of charity for the common good.” Seeking the proper vaccinations is not a political statement but the responsible, Catholic, and just thing to do for the good of all. To those who remain unvaccinated, I beg you as your spiritual father to become vaccinated as soon as possible as an act of charity for the common good. As we sing in the old song, “They will know we are Christians by our love.” We must never grow weary of loving one another and promoting life.

Be assured of a remembrance in my prayers, and please pray for me. Together, let us pray, for an end to abortion, a greater appreciation of life and of one another, and “*That all may be one.*”

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Bonnar
Bishop of Youngstown