

FROM YOUR DIOCESE

JANUARY 2024

FROM BISHOP RICHARD G. HENNING, STD

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

I hope that the Christmas and New Years celebrations offered all of us a break from routine and time with family and friends. It is a good thing to end the year and begin a new one engaged with the people who are the purpose and meaning in our lives. May the Heart of God draw us ever deeper into that mystery of love and the joy of communion with God and one another.

In another week, tens of thousands of people, young and old, will gather in Washington, DC, to give witness to the sacred dignity and the beauty of human life. While I cannot attend this year as I will be celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Altagracia here in Rhode Island, I have had many opportunities to take part in the Respect Life Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine and in the annual March for Life. Very unlike a typical protest or public demonstration, these large gatherings are always joyful expressions of compassion and solidarity. With a remarkable history of peaceful witness, the Mass and the March have always lifted my spirits and renewed my confidence in the goodness of human beings.

The Catholic Church consistently upholds the truth of human dignity even in the face of cultural hostility and shifting moral viewpoints. We do so because the Lord himself gave us an example of universal and unselfish love and charged us to love one another as He loved us. We do so because He taught us to be most attentive to the forgotten, the vulnerable, the “least” among us: “Whatsoever you do to the least of these, you do to me” (Matt 25:40). We do so in the knowledge that we will not be judged by our worldly accomplishments, wealth, or cleverness, but by the quality of our compassion and mercy.

It is a source of deep grief to me that our state has enacted laws that are among the most radical and anti-life to be found anywhere in the world. It seems so out of character in a state with such fervent hospitality and where people so often give and sacrifice for their neighbors. I am not sure how we reached this point of kindness to some yet such a merciless stance towards the most vulnerable. Of course, the proponents of such laws argue that they are a matter of freedom and choice. And yet the exclusive focus remains on the termination of innocent human life. We do not actually give vulnerable mothers a choice. We do not offer her equal resources to bring her child to see the light of day. Our system as it has been crafted brings women to only one choice – a tragic choice that occurs in heartbreaking numbers.

Please help me to communicate to the men and women of this state that the Catholic Church reveres life – each and every life. Any woman finding herself in fear or difficulty needs to know that we want to help her have a full choice and the support she will need to make the choice for life. Go to any parish in the Diocese of Providence and we will do all in our power to help you and your baby.

I also ask that we call upon our leaders to help women in Rhode Island have a true choice. Every life is sacred; every life is possibility. Where is compassion? Where is mercy? Are there not ways to respect the dignity of the mother and protect the life of her child? Every one of us was once a child in the womb! We will never be mistaken in efforts to preserve life, to nurture and protect life, to revere and celebrate life. Life is sacred and life is beautiful!



MOST REVEREND RICHARD G. HENNING, S.T.D.
Bishop of Providence

COMING IN FEBRUARY



LENT 2024

The season of preparation for the **Great Feast of Easter**—marked by prayer, penance, and almsgiving—begins with **Ash Wednesday**, observed this year on **February 14, 2024**. Get spiritual guidance, resources, and tips for living your most fruitful Lenten season yet at [dioceseofprovidence.org](https://www.dioceseofprovidence.org)

READ MORE ONLINE: Scan the QR code



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DIOCESE of PROVIDENCE

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UPCOMING EVENTS*More event details & registration links at the QR code and URL below.***FEB 3**

“Catholicism in the 21st Century: What should Catholics be doing in theology today to prepare for tomorrow?”

A Presentation by **Fr. Thomas Joseph White, OP**, Rector of the Angelicum

Hosted by **Bishop Richard G. Henning**

McVinney Auditorium
43 Dave Gavitt Way, Providence

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3
6 to 7:30 p.m.
RSVP required

FEB 10

Young Adult Lenten Retreat

Join us as we prepare our hearts and minds to enter the sacred and penitential season of Lent. May the Holy Spirit purify each of us so that we may have deeper union with the risen Christ this Easter.

Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul
30 Fenner Street, Providence

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10
8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
RSVP required

FEB 13

A Beer with the Bishop

Enjoy an evening with **Bishop Richard G. Henning**

Includes an informal talk and audience Q&A

McVinney Auditorium
43 Dave Gavitt Way, Providence

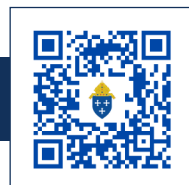
FAT TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13
6:30 p.m.
RSVP required

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