



DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

RESPECT LIFE MINISTRY

June 2010

Greetings from the Office of Respect Life,

This is a beautiful time of year, from the joy and hope of the Easter Season to the wonderful celebration of Pentecost! To celebrate Pentecost my husband and I took an afternoon driving tour of the many parishes scattered through Clinton County. We were struck by the beauty and care of the churches and the reminders of immigrant roots, all speaking of sacrifice that came with the commitment to live in and pass on the faith. Not originally from here, this was an opportunity to be exposed to still one more part of the diocesan family heritage we now share with you! In addition to the Church Feast days there has also been Mother's Day and will be Father's Day....and tucked between them is Memorial Day. Through the markers of this season weave the themes of new life, family, and sacrificial love - all central to Respect Life! So, using these themes, some thoughts and highlights:

New Life

Fontebella is a private, not for profit, **maternity shelter** located in O'Fallon, and open to serve anyone throughout southern Illinois. I encourage you to visit their website, www.fontebella.org, and get to know them. Also, watch for future opportunities to assist them along with your local Crisis Pregnancy Care Center (see www.respectlife.catholicweb.com for a listing), as they both serve different needs. The process of seeking support helps create awareness that there are real options, including shelter. This may give someone the courage to not have an abortion in secret and fear, but to try to work with parents/partners to continue an unplanned pregnancy, welcoming life, assured there is a backup plan if it turns out they have no where to go.

Family

First of all thank you for your support of the Mother's Day Roses! And thank you for whatever other ways you remembered and appreciated Moms on that day. Father's Day is right around the corner and **Leaving a Legacy** is a way to celebrate/honor Fathers ([click here](#) for information - there should be no trouble opening, but if so please call and we will e-mail it). You will see that it a "fundraiser" – but please know that while it is meant to raise some funds, proceeds will go right back out either in additions to the Respect Life Parish Kits or as gifts to other ministries (see form) – not to "support" them as though the contribution could be a budgeted line item, but far more in honor of the Fathers and Father Figures in the Diocese and in thanksgiving for the ways the receiving ministries help support family life!

Healthy families grow from strong marriages. The Deaneries continue to work hard to provide pre-cana training to couples seeking to marry, and recently there was a retreat at Our Lady of the Snows to refresh couples in their marriage. There is also a great opportunity by the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers (NACFLM) taking place at Xavier University in Cincinnati Ohio, June 23-26, 2010, titled: "**Building Blocks for a Marriage-Building Parish.**" This would be a blessing to attending couples themselves, and the benefit could then continue as they share with the parish/cluster/deanery. [Click here](#) for more information!

There are also DVDs available in the Respect Life Office from last year's NACFLM conference keynotes that you are welcome to check out. Titles include:

Bishop's Panel - Marriage-Building: Our Top Priority

The Sacrament of Marriage: Love for a Lifetime, Fr Peter Laird

State of Our Unions, Barbara Dafoe Whitehead

Unless the Lord Builds the House...Building a Covenant of Love, Greg and Julie Alexander

Theology of the Body in a Marriage-Building Church, Christopher West

An Overview of the Canons on Marriage, Benedict P. Nguyen, BA, MTS, JD/JCL

Responding to the Public Debate on Marriage, Teresa Collett

Wisdom from the Word: Biblical Insights for a Christ-filled Marriage, Fr. Britto Berchmans

Sacrificial Love

This theme focuses on the need to love authentically for the good of another. While this is part of many things I would like to highlight two.

Please take time to view the new video on **adoption** created by Catholic Social Services. Share the information with others and perhaps include an announcement drawing attention to the short video available for viewing (at www.ccsil.org – under Programs) in your bulletins. Adoption is at times the most loving response to a crisis pregnancy. Because the life of the unborn has become so devalued and the only priority is the woman's perspective, a perplexing view of adoption now commonly heard is that it is better to abort than "abandon." Let's work together to show the whole picture; to show the truth of authentic, sacrificial love on the part of the mother, the great gift to the adoptive parents, and the chance for life for the child!!

Another area of authentic and sacrificial love is in the area of **Natural Family Planning** (NFP). Being open to life and recognizing children as a blessing, while fully realizing and embracing the need that good parenting requires for sacrifice, is almost counter cultural. But NFP isn't to be confused with family size being an indicator of sacrifice, faithfulness. It is more about a couple loving freely, faithfully, and fruitfully with great respect for the good of one another, and the good of the family, spiritually and practically (and, given recent research, potentially physically and environmentally). July 25 – 31 is the National NFP Awareness Week. Begin planning now how you can raise the awareness that the Church fully celebrates both the passion and purity of married love, teaching that the sacrament of marriage symbolizes Christ's relationship with His Church. Please [click here](#) for resources that include articles, Church teaching, couples' stories, liturgy/homily notes, and prayers.

In closing, I would like to direct your attention to four quick things. First, [click here](#) about legislation to support that helps address the moral deficiencies in the Health Care Reform Law. Second, while Respect Life is a diocesan department, it is also a member agency of Catholic Charities of Southern Illinois (CCSIL), which has gone through reorganization. I encourage you to read the recent article in [The Messenger](#) about the changes. Third, the new Respect Life Parish Kits will be out in a couple of months. Take another look at this [year's articles](#) to use during the summer! Finally, there are times when I update news/information items on Facebook that you might be interested in so you might want to take a look, just click on the box ☺.

Thank you again for all you do to protect and defend Life!

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