

Social Action Commission focus for October

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

The 2026-2027 Respect Life

Theme: “Mary Mother of Life”

Each October, the Catholic Church in the United States celebrates Respect Life Month. We are called to cherish, defend and protect those who are most vulnerable, from the beginning of life to its end, and at every point in between.

This focus begins a new year of celebrating respect for life. It opens on the first Sunday of October and continues through the following September.

The 2026-2027 Respect Life Program theme “Mary Mother of Life” reflects on Our Lady’s distinguished role as mother of all the living.

Pope Leo’s Intention for October

For mental health ministry.

Let us pray that the mental health ministry be established throughout the Church, helping to overcome the stigma and discrimination of persons with mental illnesses.

<https://popesprayerusa.net/popese-intentions/>

We cannot approach the issue of mental health solely as a clinical or technical matter. Undoubtedly, the contributions of science, psychology, medicine and the neurosciences are indispensable. But we also believe that human beings can live authentically — and overcome so many inner frailties — within a horizon of meaning. When this horizon darkens, inner emptiness, isolation and despair increase. When, on the other hand, a person discovers that their life has value, that they are loved, awaited and called to a task in the world, then hope is born. And hope is not a naive illusion: it is a spiritual force that sustains life, even in the most difficult moments.

Address of Pope Leo XIV to participants in the International Conference “Maps of Hope for a Regional Educational Agenda: Mental Health, Digital Technologies and Education” Saturday, 30 May 2026

In becoming the mother of Jesus, Mary becomes the mother of life. Mary’s acceptance in this unforeseen moment demonstrates how each of us must welcome the gift of new human life, even when that gift

is unexpected or calls us to make sacrifices....

Mary’s role as the Mother of Life extends from the Annunciation all the way to the Crucifixion. On Calvary, Mary stands at the foot of the Cross with Saint John. The Gospel tells us: “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his home” (Jn 19:26-27)...

Saint John goes on to take Mary into his home and cares for her as she advances in age, demonstrating our responsibility to continue our care for human life, from conception to natural death. Mary, who taught us how to nurture human life, becomes the recipient of that same honor and care.

The life of the Blessed Mother teaches us to respect each human life in every stage and circumstance. Mary is our model for upholding the sanctity of all human life. O Mary, “Mother of the living, to you do we entrust the cause of life.”

<https://www.respectlife.org/mary-mother-of-life>



What can we do?

A PRAYER FOR HOPE

Heavenly Father, in the sacrament of Baptism, you have given us the gift of new life. Through your son our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, you have made us your own.

Help us to recognize the gift of human life as a sign of hope in our world.

Reveal to us the places where your precious gift of life is most in need of protection and strengthen us to defend life in all stages and circumstances, from the child in the womb to the elderly and dying.

Guided by your Holy Spirit, guard us from discouragement and give us the grace to be messengers of hope, filled with confidence that nothing can separate us from your love.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



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How to Build a Culture of Life

Read the full version at
respectlifeprogram.org/culture-of-life.

Watching the news and reading the headlines, we may feel helpless seeing the heartbreaking lack of respect for human life. *How do we respond?* Changing the culture is a process of conversion that begins in our own hearts. When we encounter Christ, experience His love, and deepen our relationship with Him, we become more aware of our own immeasurable worth and that of others. His unchanging love is the source of our God-given dignity, which, therefore, cannot be taken away. When someone is facing great trials, we need to walk with them on their journey, intercede for them, and be open to sharing Christ's love however He directs. We simply need to follow where He leads.

**Our mission
field is
daily life.**

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Respect Life Novena

This novena prays for the protection of human life, from conception to natural death. Each day of the novena features a different prayer intention, as well as a short reflection, suggested actions, and additional information to help participants go deeper.

The USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities sends the novena by email annually October 22-30, but it can be prayed at any time.

<https://www.usccb.org/respect-life-novena>

Diocese of Davenport Respect Life Month Events

October 1, 2026 - October 31, 2026

[Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#)

<https://www.usccb.org/events/2026/domestic-violence-awareness-month>

October 1, 2026 - October 31, 2026

[Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month](#)

<https://www.usccb.org/events/2026/pregnancy-and-infant-loss-awareness-month>

Saturday, October 10, 2026

[World Day Against the Death Penalty](#)

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/catholic-campaign-end-use-death-penalty-info-sheet>

Friday, October 16, 2026

[World Food Day](#)

<https://www.fao.org/world-food-day/en>

Sunday, October 18, 2026

[World Mission Sunday](#)

<https://www.usccb.org/committees/evangelization-catechesis/world-missions>