



Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama

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Office of the Bishop

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

"Respect for the dignity of the human person demands a commitment to human rights across a broad spectrum... Yet abortion and euthanasia have become *preeminent threats to human dignity* because they *directly attack Life Itself*, the most fundamental human good and the condition for all others. They are committed against those who are weakest and most defenseless, those who are genuinely 'the poorest of the poor'" [US Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life*, 1998, n. 5]

Since the *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* Supreme Court decisions of January 22, 1973, at least **60,665,000** American babies have been destroyed by abortion [<http://www.numberofabortions.com/>]. Two babies are destroyed by abortion every single minute of every single day in the USA. In Alabama, in 2014, 8080 babies died by abortion -- 22 children, a *classroom full* -- every single day. In 2016, 6642 babies died – an 18% decrease; yet, 18 babies in Alabama are still aborted every day.

Beyond these unrepeatable lives, their offspring will never even exist, will never have the First Right which God intended for each of them – the Right to Life!

Saint John Paul II noted that, "...the common outcry, which is justly made on behalf of human rights—for example, the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture—is false and illusory if the Right to Life, *the most basic and fundamental right and the condition for all other personal rights*, is not defended with maximum determination." [*Christifideles Laici*, no. 38, Saint John Paul II].

"All too often, as we know from experience, people do not choose life, they do not accept the 'Gospel of Life' but let themselves be led by ideologies and ways of thinking that block life, that do not respect life" at every stage. [Pope Francis, 2013]

Because of this massive indifference to the great Gift of Life, we are - each and all - called to daily prayer and sacrifice, and to Public Witness for Life in our everyday prayer and action for the Cause of Life.

We can fulfill this challenge through grassroots public witness for the protection of human life at all stages through events such as **40 Days For Life** campaigns, which will run from **September 26 through November 4, 2018**. There will be a 40 Days for Life campaign in our diocese in Birmingham, in Montgomery and Mobile, and in hundreds of other locations in the USA and other nations.

I endorse the 40 Days for Life Campaign. In our diocese, a 40 Days for Life campaign will take place at Planned Parenthood in Birmingham (1211 South 27th Place, 35205, daily, 6 am – 6 pm).

In spiritual solidarity with the 40 Days for Life, a **NOVENA OF MASSES** will be conducted in our diocese, **October 1-9 2018**.

All Priests and parishes are encouraged to offer one or more Masses during this timeframe, specifically that the new Planned Parenthood Birmingham abortion site will not be built and for the conversion of all the Planned Parenthood staff.

This is the major abortion site in our state, performing at least half of all the abortions. Please pray that God will answer our prayer for its 'permanent' closure!

For information about, and registration for the **September 26 through November 4, 2018 40 Days for Life Campaign** in Birmingham, call (205) 305-0950, or visit:

- Birmingham, <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/birmingham/>;
- Mobile, <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/mobile/>;
- Montgomery, <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/montgomery/>.

"As Americans, as Catholics and as pastors of our people, we write therefore today to call our fellow citizens back to our country's founding principles, especially to renew our national respect for the rights of those who are unborn, weak, disabled and terminally ill. Real freedom rests on the inviolability of every person as a child of God." [US Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life*, 1998, n. 6]

It is time for us to work and pray every day that God will "cure" abortion in our nation! We cannot rely on courts, Congress, or the President to end abortion; God *allowed* abortion to infiltrate our nation, and only God can remove it, in His Time. God allowed this for *our* purification and sanctification, when we serve as His instruments.

Yet, if we as Catholics are not part of the 'cure', then we are probably part of the problem.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Protestant pastor in Germany who was killed during the Nazi Holocaust because of his public protest, noted that "Silence in the face of evil is *itself* evil; God will not hold us *guiltless*. *Not* to speak is to speak. *Not* to act is to act."

We are reminded in Proverbs 24: "You may say that it is none of your business, but God knows and judges your motives... He knows. And He will reward you according to what you do." [v.11-12]

I invite all Priests and all Catholics in the Diocese of Birmingham to Witness for the Victory of Justice for our unborn brothers and sisters by praying and working every day to spread the Culture of Life to every person we meet!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Robert J. Baker, S.T.D.
Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama

Pastors and Administrators: I ask that this letter of endorsement be published in your parish bulletins the weekend of September 29/30.