



Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls
Office of the Bishop

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October 7, 2022

Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

How fitting it is that October, designated “Respect Life Month,” opens with the feast of St. Therese of Lisieux. Known by her nickname, the Little Flower, because she humbly considered herself one of the smallest flowers in God’s garden, St. Therese died at the young age of 24. Despite her short and hidden life as a cloistered contemplative sister, she became a great Doctor of the Church because of her insight that all persons can become holy by doing the smallest of things with great love. St. Therese’s “Little Way” is a testimony to the great value of each and every human life, even those with little or no value in the eyes of the world. Created in the image of God, every human life is inherently made to give and receive love, no matter how small or “worthless” it seems.

Respect Life Month has special significance this year. For the last 49 years, our nation’s laws have not valued unborn lives, and approximately 64 million American children have been killed. Thanks be to God, following the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health* decision this year, our own state’s laws now defend life in the womb. To all of those men and women who have dedicated their prayers and labors to this cause, thank you and God bless you.

But our service to the cause of life is not over. Our world remains wracked with violence; therefore, our efforts to build up a culture of life must continue to extend to all those whom the world does not value. Abortion remains a preeminent priority, as South Dakota is facing an effort to amend our state constitution to legalize abortion of unborn boys and girls right up to the moment of birth. Further, our nation remains in the minority of countries that use the death penalty. Dismal conditions continue to prompt dangerous migration in various parts of the world, which itself gives rise to many hardships, especially for children. Influential segments of our society now encourage assisted suicide or euthanasia for the elderly, ill, or disabled, calling it “compassion.” And the specter of war, even nuclear war, haunts the world. Our consciences are rightly troubled. We are called to greater prayer, sacrifice, and work for life.

While we labor to build a culture of life in our own unique ways, a common call is clear. Brothers and sisters, during this Respect Life Month, I urge you to pray for a new outpouring of divine love in the world! Pray that every unborn child might be welcomed and cherished in love; pray that every family might know peace and stability at home; pray that all might see God’s image in every soul, even an unrepentant criminal; pray that the elderly and sick might be valued with tenderness and respect; pray for those who have aborted a child for healing and reconciliation through God’s merciful love; and pray that everyone will come to know, love, appreciate and protect life at all stages.

The darkness in the world can make this seem unattainable, but may we never forget that Jesus Christ conquered death and overcame the world. Let us put our confidence in God, with whom all things are possible. Mary, virgin most holy, pray for us!

In the Love of God,

Most Reverend Donald E. DeGrood
Bishop of Sioux Falls