



Office of the Bishop

Diocese of Richmond

December 9, 2020
Memorial of Saint Juan Diego

Dear Priests, Deacons, Religious, and Lay Leaders,

Each year the Diocese of Richmond has faithfully sent thousands of parishioners, families, and students to the March for Life to be a witness for the dignity of life. Today, we celebrate the Memorial of Saint Juan Diego whose witness to us of humble, dedicated, perseverance should serve as an inspiration as we commit to speaking up for the most vulnerable.

This year the COVID-19 pandemic will alter our ability to participate in the March for Life. While individuals and families can always choose to attend the March on their own or with members of their communities, in 2021 parishes and Diocesan sponsored groups will not be organizing trips to the March for Life via charter bus. The reality of the pandemic has made this mode of transportation prohibitive for this year.

As an alternative, I invite you to join me, through the Center for Marriage, Family, and Life, in participating in several local initiatives so that we may come together in both prayer and action to defend the right to life.

1. On **January 28** I invite you to join me for a livestreamed Mass from the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart at 7:00 PM. This Mass will be offered for the specific intention of a greater respect for all life and for an end to abortion.
2. On **January 29** I encourage each parish, school, and campus ministry of the Diocese to offer a Mass for the Respect Life movement, as well as engage in an act of advocacy to help advance an end to abortion.
3. In addition, the Center for Marriage, Family, and Life will provide **pro-life programming** for youth groups, campus ministries and our Catholic schools. This will include speakers, discussion questions, and group activities. Communities may utilize this programming for Respect Life Sunday or on January 29 in connection with the March for Life that day.

All information for these endeavors can be found on the Center for Marriage, Family, and Life's website. While it is disappointing that we adjust our previous March for Life efforts, I hope that our efforts this year can sustain the movement, and that we can continue to be a powerful witness to life.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Barry C Knestout
Bishop of Richmond