

Respect Life Sunday



*It is necessary to become courageously 'pro-woman,' promoting a choice that is truly in favour of women. It is precisely the woman... who pays the highest price, not only for motherhood but even more for its destruction, for the suppression of the life of the child who has been conceived. The only honest stance, in these cases, is that of **radical solidarity with the woman.***

It is not right to leave her alone.
— John Paul II,
Crossing the Threshold of Hope.

*Where life is involved the service of charity must be **profoundly consistent.***

It cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an indivisible good.

*We need then to show **care for all life and for the life of everyone.***

— The Gospel of Life, n 87.

Pro-woman & Pro-life

Listening to the experiences of women before and after abortion reminds us that the well-being of a pregnant mother and her child cannot be separated. To harm one is always to harm the other; to care for one always requires caring for both. No woman should have to choose between her own well-being and the life of her child.

Abortion is an issue which often divides couples, families and communities. But it is possible to unite genuine concern for women with the protection of the unborn.



In Australia ...

- 1 in 4 pregnancies ends in abortion.
- 73% of the community think that this is too high.
- 87% of the community support a reduction in the number of abortions without restricting access.²



Too many women report being pressured by their circumstances into having an abortion; too many women feel that they have no other option. They know that an abortion will be the death of their child, but continuing with the pregnancy can seem to threaten their well-being and future as well. In these situations abortion might promise to solve all of a woman's problems at once: relationship problems, difficulties with finances or housing, educational or workplace problems, the demands of caring for existing children, embarrassment, fear of the unknown ...

But in reality, "the quick fix of abortion seems to hide too many losses: her child, her bodily integrity, her dignity as a woman worthy of faithful love and workplace understanding. ... There is tremendous sadness, loneliness, in the cry, 'A woman's right to choose'."¹

The irony of the pro-choice/ pro-abortion position is that it usually only advocates one solution to women's problems – one solution does not provide women with choice!

Women who are pregnant in difficult circumstances need more choices, not fewer. They need choices which do not demand that they decide between their own often pressing needs and the new life within them. Non-violent, life-affirming options are needed.

There is always an alternative to abortion. There is always another way forward ... but no woman should have to take that path alone.

Every human being deserves our reverence and love, from the beginning to the end of the continuum of life. All human rights ultimately depend upon that recognition. But respect for human dignity also requires practical support for vulnerable people. We need to build a culture that respects the link between life and love, welcomes and esteems children and families, and supports women in every way.

— Catholic Bishops of Australia, 2004.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I consecrated you" (Jer 1:5): the life from its very beginning, is part of God's plan.



- Abortions are only rarely undertaken for a specified medical condition (0.3%), fetal abnormality (2.2%), or rape (0%).³
- The vast majority of abortions are performed on healthy mothers and babies.
- The factors most frequently contributing to the decision to seek a termination are concerns about finances (60%), change in lifestyle, single parenthood and being too young.⁴

Everyone has an obligation to be at the service of life. Together we are called to offer the world new signs of hope and work to ensure that justice and solidarity increase and that a new culture of human life will be affirmed, for the building of a civilisation of truth and love (c.f *The Gospel of Life*, n. 6).

Many people are already actively working to bring about a change in thinking and acting, but we can all do more. We need to: encourage supportive, committed relationships; promote family-friendly public policy; and develop life-affirming practices within our parishes, educational facilities, workplaces and local communities.

Pregnancy counselling and support services operate throughout the country, helping women and children by exploring and supporting realistic alternatives to abortion, but they need our practical and prayerful support.

We must all think of how we can offer practical help and support so that every pregnant woman and unborn child might be welcomed, honoured and loved. They deserve nothing less.

... you, and before you were
... of every individual,
... can.

The Gospel of Life, n. 44.



Too many women describe feeling compelled to have an abortion.

"My mind was in a whirl and I was too confused to think straight ... I had nowhere to turn and no alternative. I requested a referral to an abortion clinic ... On my way home I sobbed my heart out and begged my boyfriend not to make me do this." CELESTE.

"The financial strain in my life was too enormous to even consider having the baby ... I felt so railroaded by 'the system' - the alternatives seemed worse, as anybody who is involved in the vicious cycle of homelessness, domestic violence, unemployment, low incomes, welfare and public housing, knows ... no woman would kill her unborn child if there were suitable, decent alternatives." JAEL.

"... when you are cornered there does not seem to be a choice." BEATRICE.⁵



Pregnancy Counselling & Support Services

We Pray That We Might Be Generous In Our Support to All Pregnant Women

Pregnancy Counselling and Support Services provides; emotional, practical support and assistance to pregnant woman so they can keep their baby.

- Are you, your partner or family member feeling confused, overwhelmed and concerned about your pregnancy?
- Are you feeling isolated; without any assistance or support?
- Would you like the opportunity to explore options so you can feel more confident within yourself?
- Would you like to discuss your situation with an experienced counsellor?

IF SO, PREGNANCY COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES COULD BE THE SERVICE FOR YOU THIS IS A FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL SERVICE FOR WOMEN OF ALL AGES, THEIR PARTNERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

PREGNANCY COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDES YOU WITH:

- COUNSELLING; individual, couple and family
- ASSESSMENT & referral
- FREE PREGNANCY TESTING
- PRACTICAL; support and assistance

PROJECT LISA

Project Lisa is Pregnancy Counselling and Support Services volunteer service. We need volunteers to assist us in providing support and assistance to pregnant women. This is an opportunity for you to become a volunteer; assisting and supporting others.



Catholic Community
Service

For further information regarding Pregnancy Counselling and Support Services and/or how to become a volunteer contact:

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Published by the Life Office

Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney,
For Respect Life Sunday, 2005.

lifeoffice

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