Choose Life because every person from their conception to their death has an immeasurable worth, a dignity that is given to them from God which can never be removed.

REVERENCE FOR LIFE PRAYER
O Mary, bright dawn of the new world, to you do we entrust the cause of life. Look down, O Mother, upon the vast numbers of babies not allowed to be born, of the poor whose lives are made difficult, of men and women who are victims of brutal violence, of the elderly and the sick killed by indifference or out of misguided mercy.

Obtain for all who believe in your Son the grace to accept the Gospel of Life as a gift ever new, the joy of celebrating it with gratitude throughout their lives, and the courage to bear witness to it, in order to build the civilization of truth and love to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life.

Amen.

1 Catechism of the Catholic Church 2273.
2 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2304.
3 Order of Christian Funerals, article 5, page 3.

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CHOOSE LIFE: FOR THE UNBORN AND THOSE THEIR LIVES AFFECT

We are all formed in the image and likeness of our God (Gen 1:26-27), and no political party, cultural understanding, or activist group can remove that from us.¹ The Church upholds this teaching for all people.

We are commissioned to uphold the dignity of each and every person. When we leave Mass the priest or deacon will tell us to, “go in the peace of Christ, proclaiming the Gospel with our lives!” To this we exclaim, “Thanks be to God!” We are called to live in a way that affirms and proclaims the infinite value of each and every person. Living in the promise of the Easter story – out of death comes new life – we can journey alongside those facing unwanted pregnancy, especially those pregnancies that resulted from acts of violence. As the Body of Christ, we are pained when such terrible acts happen. This fact does not remove the innumerable worth of that new life. The way in which a life is created does not determine their value. Their dignity and love are infinite and unchanging, though sometimes it can be hard for us to see that.

Choosing life for the unborn calls us to safeguard the dignity of those who, through a loss of their own dignity, are put into a position where abortion seems like the best or only option for them. The Church calls us to be builders of God’s Kingdom here on earth. In such a Kingdom, rape, incest, unjust medical and economic systems, among many other factors would not exist therefore no one would feel that abortion was the best or only option for them. If we want to protect the unborn we need to simultaneously work towards protecting the dignity of all of those affected by the lives of the unborn as well.

CHOOSE LIFE: FOR THE POOR

“Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honour God” (Prov 14:31). Factors like our ethnicity, religion, education, and access to resources does not take away from this. There are many examples of how we do not live this out. The poor, homeless, unemployed, imprisoned, mentally ill, and oppressed people are God’s children too. The poor are with us, and are our responsibility.

The Preferential Option for the Poor is one of the cornerstones of Church teachings. Preferential Option for the Poor means that we put the needs of the most vulnerable, the poor, voiceless, and oppressed before our own wants. Our actions, thoughts, and prayers must be focused on them. We do not take or purchase for ourselves the “extras” while their basic needs remain unmet.

CHOOSE LIFE: FOR THE ELDERLY, SICK AND SUFFERING

Those who are ill, suffering, and dying have a great gift to offer those who accompany them through their final days, especially their family and loved ones. Funerals “offer worship, praise, and thanksgiving to God for the gift of a life which has now been returned to God.”³ The God who first formed them in their mother’s womb (Jer 1:5).

Accompanying a loved one, a friend, or even a stranger through their final days in this world can be a great gift to all. There is an authentic human-ness that exists in these kinds of situations. People are vulnerable, and vulnerability allows for compassion, mercy, and a profound love to be experienced. It is this kind of self-giving love that we are called to offer to those around us each and every day.

The Church has recognized this as an insightful way for people to understand the incarnational love of God. A God that loved us so much that Christ

CHOOSE LIFE: FOR THE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

“I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly” (Jn 10:10b). Today in our world, all we need to do is watch the news and we can see how people are unable to live this kind of life due to violence. Peoples’ dignity is infringed upon in many ways. There are wars and genocides all around us, unlawful and unjust incarcerations, stories of surviours from sexual, mental, physical, and verbal abuse, and over 68 million refugees worldwide. The suicide rates are rising, especially in our northern Indigenous communities, and there are many other examples of violence in our world. How are we to respond as Christians?

“Do not be afraid,” is the most common phrase throughout the Bible. We have to pray, for peace of course, but we are called to be advocates for peace as well. St. Theresa of Avila stated that “Christ has no body now but yours… Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world…” We have to act as Christ did, serving and loving others. Like the poor widow, we are asked to give, not merely out of our abundance, but so that others can be taken care of (Mk 12:41-44).

If we take seriously Jesus’ proclamation in John 10, and St. Theresa’s prayer, we need to strive for the development of human life. The Catechism tells us that we need peace to achieve this. “Peace is not merely an absence of war, and it is not limited to maintaining a balance of power…[but] peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity.”²