



## THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

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### Office of Communications

P.O. Box 9023, Rockville Centre, NY 11571-9023

Tel: 516-678-5800, ext. 221 • Fax: 516-594-0984 • [www.drvc.org](http://www.drvc.org)

### STATEMENT

**DATE:**           **October 4, 2021**

**RE:**             **October Respect Life Month**

**FROM:**       **Most Reverend John O. Barres, Bishop of Rockville Centre**

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The study of family genealogy can be a spiritual and even a Eucharistic experience. There is something about tracing the generations back in history and getting some understanding of who our ancestors were and where they came from that is so powerful.

Every step they took in their lives at their moment in history is mysteriously connected to every step we take in life in our moment of history.

Study of our family genealogies reveals a very powerful dimension of our understanding of the Catholic doctrine of the Communion of Saints.

As we look at page after page of genealogical charts, it is amazing to realize that every person on the chart had to meet providentially their specific spouse for us to ever come into existence.

It is so powerful to trace the lines and twists and turns of providence in our families.

Our study of family genealogy inevitably leads us to the Catholic Mass and our belief in prayer for the souls of the dead expressed in every Eucharistic Prayer.

Catholics do not turn to reality show mediums and fortune-tellers to deal with the painful loss of our loved ones. We reject these dangerous roads that only violate the First Commandment and open the portals of evil.

Instead, Catholics turn to the Catholic Mass. We turn to the Eucharistic prayers. We turn to our belief in the Communion of Saints and our belief in friendship that goes beyond the chasm of death.

All of us have memories and experiences of family reunions and the Catholic Mass reminds us that these reunions are more extensive and deeper than the limited family reunions we experience in this life.



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The anticipation of meeting the people who went before us genealogically connects to our Catholic belief in the Communion of Saints and our burning desire for Heaven and Eternal Life.

In the light of these beautiful readings from the Book of Genesis and the Gospel of Mark which celebrate the Catholic biblical theology and spirituality of marriage, we celebrate Respect Life Sunday and October Respect Life Month.

We also are deeply aware of the Eucharistic Revival and Eucharistic Evangelization efforts of the Diocese of Rockville Centre in partnership with the United States Conference of Bishops, and every Diocese and parish in the country.

Eucharistic Evangelization and the Gospel of Human Life cannot be separated. They belong together.

We know that our deep reverence for the Body and Blood of Christ expresses itself in a deep reverence for the sanctity of human life at every stage of life.

We know that the deep reverence and respect that married couples have for the Body and Blood of Christ gives them the strength to reverence and respect one another and “to transform the world and history” through their holy and evangelizing family life.

JRR Tolkien once wrote to a family member these words: “I put before you the one great thing to love on earth, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. There you will find true glory, true honor, true romance, and the true ways of all your loves upon earth.”

Our radical fidelity to the Sunday Mass and to the Body and Blood of Christ makes us radically faithful and united in our marriages and in our families.

The Body and Blood of Christ leads us on the true ways, the holy ways, of all our loves upon earth.

Pope St. John Paul II once wrote: “The eucharist is the very source of Christian marriage. The Eucharistic sacrifice represents Christ’s covenant of love with the Church, sealed with his blood on the cross. In this sacrifice of the new and eternal covenant, Christian spouses encounter the source from which their own marriage covenant flows, is interiorly structured and continuously renewed. As a representation of Christ’s sacrifice of love for the Church, the eucharist is a fountain of charity. In the Eucharistic gift of charity the Christian family finds the foundation and soul of its ‘communion’ and ‘mission.’...the Eucharist is a never-ending source of missionary and apostolic dynamism for the Christian family.” (FC 57)



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As the Shepherd of so many married couples and families in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, I am so inspired by the heroic holiness and radiant missionary spirit of so many married couples and families. I am inspired by the Eucharistic devotion and love for the Catholic Mass of so many families.

Catholic Evangelization, Eucharistic Evangelization, so often happens in the Church marriage to marriage and family to family. Our families need their parish family. The parish family needs each and every family.

My dream as a successor of the Apostles and your Bishop is that one day many of us will be together for a St. Peter's Square Canonization in which the images of married couples and their children (think of St. Terese of Lisieux and her parents) from the Diocese of Rockville Centre will be unfurled down the walls of the Basilica as we celebrate their canonizations.

May our love for the Sacrament of Marriage and our love for the Family lead us to be radiant and holy witnesses of the Gospel of Human Life and our Catholic Social Justice teaching in the public square! Adelante!

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