



THE DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO
Office of the Bishop

January 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Gift of Life is wondrous, complex and precious. In so many ways, amazingly strong and resilient; in other ways, oh so fragile. As the Prophet Jeremiah, speaking on God's behalf as the Creator of every human life, beautifully wrote: *"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you. I appointed you a prophet to the nations."* (Jeremiah 1:5) God knows us from the beginning of time; God has plans for us that are never-ending.

On January 22nd, our country will observe the 49th anniversary of the tragic day in 1973 when abortion in our country was legalized (Roe v. Wade Supreme Court Decision). There is no other day that reminds us of the fragility of the lives of unborn babies, and the threats to God's Plan more than this tragic anniversary. We deeply grieve over the more than 61 million babies killed by abortion in the United States since that fateful date. We also mourn for the pain that abortion has brought to the lives of the mothers of those babies, as well as to the fathers and other family members of those children. The effects of abortion extend to all members of the Body of Christ.

However, our faith urges us to be filled with hope as we continue turning to God with our prayer intentions for the protection of all God's people, especially those most vulnerable which includes in particular those babies in their mothers' wombs; we pray for an end to legalized abortion in the United States. January 22nd has been designated by the Church as a "Day of Prayer and Penance for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children," and is to be observed as a "day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life, and a day to do penance for the violations that have taken place against the dignity of the human person through acts of abortion."

I urge members of our Diocese, and all people of good will, to join together in observing this special Day of Prayer and Penance. On Sunday, January 23rd, I will be celebrating the 11:30 a.m. Mass at St. Augustine Cathedral for this special intention. I also ask every Parish to designate one of its Masses on this Sunday for this same intention. In addition, I invite all people to join in the Annual Nine Days for Life Novena scheduled for January 19-27. [uscbb.org/prolife/join-9-days-life]

Finally, I encourage you to consider joining with our Christian neighbors in the greater Kalamazoo area on Sunday afternoon, January 23rd, for an Ecumenical Prayer for Life gathering. This event will be held outdoors on the grounds of Kalamazoo Christian School (corner of Stadium Drive and Howard Street) beginning at 3 p.m. Bundle up; come and join together in prayer and song for life.

Please prayerfully consider your participation and important witness. We must continue to pray and do penance for an end to abortion, and for a restoration of respect and dignity for all human life, from the first moment of conception until the last moment of natural breath. Let us respect, value and give thanks for the precious Gift from God that every human life is.

United as God's People of Faith and Hope in our commitment to see every human life as sacred, and asking that we keep one another in prayer remembrance, I remain.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley
Bishop of Kalamazoo