

Homily: 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday: 2021: Cycle B: Gen 2:18-24; Ps 128; Heb 2:9-11; Mk 10:2-16  
***“Respecting and Protecting all Human Life from Conception until Natural death”***

Today is **“Respect Life” Sunday** in the Church in America. It is a call to remember that all human beings from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death are created in the image of God and need to be protected by our laws and cherished by all.

1. **The 1<sup>st</sup> reading from the book of Genesis reminds us of the truth that God made man and women in His own image, and so we belong to Him from the moment we are brought into being at conception.** We as believers now deal with a culture today that is far from that truth in so many ways, which our late great Holy Father, Pope John Paul II famously called a “culture of death” (see his encyclical **Evangelium Vitae: the Gospel of Life**: 1995) that often fails to see the human person as being made in God’s image but rather an “object” that can be discarded when not convenient to the stronger people in charge. Hence we have to deal with legalized abortion, the push for legalized euthanasia, the downplaying of the sacredness of marriage between a man and a woman, the lack of respect for the human body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, the pushing to the side of the most vulnerable members of society, be it the unborn, the handicapped, the mentally ill, and the terminally ill. What do we do in the face of that troubling reality? Do we get angry and frustrated and take on a cynical attitude: that it is just the way things are and there is nothing we can do about it? Or do we see that we indeed can make things better one person at a time in God’s grace and mercy. Yes someday these evils will be eliminated for good by God Himself, but we have to wait on the Lord in **patience and faith**. As the Scriptures say, *“The rash person has no integrity; but the just person because of his faith shall live.”* (See Habakkuk: 2:4).
2. **We need to do our part to speak up in defense of the Lord’s vision of love and respect for life in our circumstances:** be it in our families, among our acquaintances, and at school and at work. **God will give us the grace and strength to do so, if we ask Him.** Remember what Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 25: *whatever you do for the least of my brothers and sisters, you do for me.* In our day, one of the main ways we do this, in addition to living **the**

**Spiritual and Corporeal works of Mercy**, is to be “a People of Life”. Defending human life in all its forms, especially when it is under attack is not easy and it causes interior suffering; but as the letter to the Hebrews says today, *“It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the leader (Jesus) to their salvation perfect through suffering.”* So when we as Jesus’s followers suffer because of our witness to the sanctity of life, it is a suffering that will bear great fruit for souls in due time if we unite to Jesus in prayer. How can we be a better witness to the sanctity of human life? We can do this through becoming informed on what the Church teaches on the “Life issues” and why, and then witnessing to that truth in love and integrity, and speaking up to defend life especially when it is under attack by spiritually blind people. We can do this by daily praying for the protection of human life where and when it is under attack by others. We can do this by supporting Church and public officials who have the courage to go on the record in defense of life. We can do this by supporting pro-life organizations, like Mom’s house, Birthright, and Human Life International that help defend life against the attacks of some in our culture. We can do this, in a spirit of love and humility, by pointing out to people we know, who may have sinned against life, e.g., by participating in or encouraging an abortion (which is a very grave sin), or allowing an older sick person to be euthanized, that there is indeed forgiveness and healing from God and the Church in the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** and in post-abortion counseling services like **Project Rachel** ([www.hopeafterabortion.com](http://www.hopeafterabortion.com)). There is much for us to do in all these areas of witness or testimony to the sanctity of all human life. God will help us do so well.

3. **Finally we should turn to our Lady, who we honor in a special way during the month of October, and ask her to help us in this noble cause of defending and protecting all human life made in the image of her Son Jesus.** She is often invoked under her title of “**Our Lady of Guadalupe**” by people in the Pro-life apostolate since in her approved apparition at Guadalupe, Mexico in 1531 (December 9, 10 & 12 – only 3 days!) she appeared as a Pregnant Native

American princess which is the only time we know of as a Church that Mary appeared pregnant, in an Apparition. It was not accidental, for it was soon afterwards that the vast majority of the Native American Aztec people were converted to Catholicism. *“The news of the appearance of the Indian mother who left her imprint on the tilma spread like wildfire! Three points were appreciated by the native population. **First**, the lady was Indian, spoke Nahuatl, the Aztec language, and appeared to an Indian, not a Spaniard! **Second**, Juan Diego explained that she appeared at Tepeyac, the place of Tonantzin, the mother god, sending a clear message that the Virgin Mary was the mother of the true God, and that the Catholic Christian religion was to replace the Aztec religion. And **third**, the Indians, who learned through pictures and symbols, understood the image of the tilma, which revealed the beautiful message of Christianity: the true God sacrificed himself for mankind; instead of the horrendous life they had endured sacrificing humans to appease the frightful gods! It is no wonder that over the next seven years, from 1531 to 1538, eight million natives of Mexico converted to Catholicism!”* (from the article “Our Lady of Guadalupe Mother of the Americas” from [www.maryourmother.net/Guadalupe.html](http://www.maryourmother.net/Guadalupe.html)) **The Aztecs had practiced human sacrifice as part of their religious ceremonies; untold multitudes were murdered by them.** We need to similarly invoke Mary’s help for our culture, so that we turn away from the “culture of death” that allows such things as legalized abortion and instead build up a “culture of life and love” that respects and protects each human person, and fosters the sanctity of marriage and the dignity of each life - no matter what obstacles we may face. We need to pray for **the conversion of the hearts** of all in our world today: that we as a people learn to love human life ever more deeply, to protect life in our laws and institutions, and to take care of the most vulnerable among us. **WHY?** Because that is what God calls us to do: *“whatever you do for the least of my brothers and sisters, you do for me”*; our **Final Judgment** will be based on that! Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.

**Recommended reading: The Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae).** St. John Paul II. 1995. Pauline Books and Media. Boston. Or you can access it on the Vatican’s website: [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) under the Pope John Paul II section and click on encyclicals.