

“The injustice and harm racism causes are an attack on human life. The Church in the United States has spoken out consistently and forcefully against abortion, assisted suicide, euthanasia, the death penalty, and other forms of violence that threaten human life.

It is not a secret that these attacks on human life have severely affected people of color, who are disproportionately affected by poverty, targeted for abortion, have less access to healthcare, have the greatest numbers on death row, and are most likely to feel pressure to end their lives when facing serious illness.

As bishops, we unequivocally state that racism is a life issue.”

***-Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops***

Racism is a Life Issue



open wide our hearts

As we begin Respect Life Month this October, the Diocesan Public Policy Committee is asking parishes to reflect on the U.S. Catholic Bishops’ pastoral letter *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*, and particularly their strong statement that “racism is a life issue.”

When we think of life issues, we most often think of abortion and then end-of-life concerns, so this statement may come as a surprise. But if you reflect on it, and even better, read the whole pastoral letter (available online at www.usccb.org under “Issues and Action”), it becomes clear why the pervasive evil of racism is an affront to the dignity of human life. It underlies so many other issues in U.S. society that destroy life.

You can find a packet of material on the pastoral at the Diocese of Rochester web site, www.dor.org, under “Public Policy”. It includes prayers of the faithful for Mass and bulletin notices with excerpts from the pastoral letter.

You’ll find many educational resources about understanding and addressing racism at for children, teens and adults at: www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/educational-resources-on-racism.cfm



What are we called to do about racism? We can start by learning about the history of racism in our country and its current effects, and listening to people of different races to understand their experience. We can go out of our way to get to know people who don’t look like us. We can resolve to speak up against racist remarks, even among our family. We should shop, vote and hire people in ways that counter racism.

A few ideas on difficult but relevant subjects to ponder:

Should we call October 14 “Columbus Day” or “Indigenous Peoples Day”?

Do all the images of God, the angels and the saints in our churches have white skin?

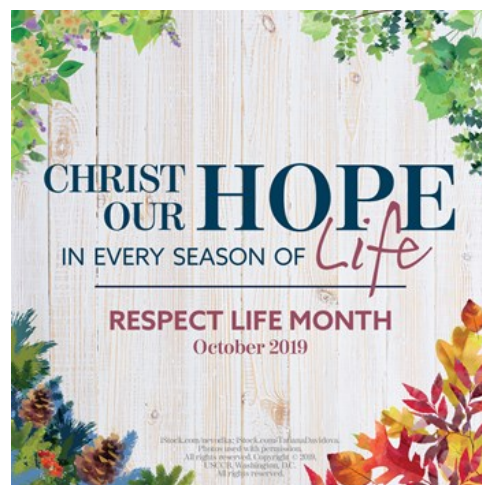
If most of the immigrants entering our country to escape violence and oppression were coming from Finland and Sweden, would our immigration policy be different?

How can we better understand the issues around police killings of unarmed African-Americans?

Respect Life Month: Building a culture that cherishes and protects every human life.

You can learn about a variety of life issues at the USCCB's special web site: www.respectlife.org/articles Two of the short articles are included below. In our diocese, we'll be advocating against legislation to legalize **physician assisted suicide** in New York State in the upcoming legislative session. Our elected officials need to hear from us! You can start right now by calling them to say you oppose this policy that will further diminish the value placed on human life.

State Senate switchboard: (518) 455-2800
State Assembly switchboard: (518) 455-4100
Governor's office: (518) 474-8390



Top Reasons to Oppose Assisted Suicide

Read the full version at
respectlifeprogram.org/reasons-against-assisted-suicide.

Some polls indicate that the public is receptive to assisted suicide. But the same polls show that people's views shift when they learn about its dangers—especially the dangers for those who are poor, elderly, disabled, or without access to good medical care. Consider that, in Oregon and California, some patients' health insurance offered to pay for assisted suicide, but not treatment. And in states where assisted suicide is legal, often no psychiatric evaluation or treatment is required. Additionally, assisted suicide fosters discrimination by creating two classes of people: those whose suicides we spend millions of dollars to prevent and those whose suicides we assist and treat as a positive good.

**Assisted
suicide fosters
discrimination.**

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Children as Commodities

Read the full version at
respectlifeprogram.org/children-commodities.

At seventeen, Natalie* discovered that her parents had contracted with another woman to become pregnant using her father's sperm and the woman's own egg. Natalie became estranged from her parents, hurt that money, rather than the physical expression of married love, was the context in which she was brought into the world. Since the advent of IVF (in vitro fertilization), the floodgates have been opened to bringing about reproduction through egg and sperm donation and surrogate pregnancies. Yet these technologies are fraught with medical, legal, and moral complications. Children deserve to not be created as a product of reproductive technology, but to be given by God, and to be born through married love.

**Children
deserve to
be given by
God, born of
married love.**

**Name changed for privacy. This is a summary of a USCCB Respect Life Program article by the same name and is reprinted with permission. © 2019, USCCB, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.*

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