

Diocese of Austin

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Office of the Bishop

September 28, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

October is Respect Life and World Missions Month. During these next several weeks, your participation in acts of generosity is not just a blessing but a significant contribution to the Body of Christ. This is a distinctive time of the year when the Church promotes the dignity of all human life from conception to natural death and cultivates awareness and support for the mission territories of the Catholic Church. Your participation makes a difference.

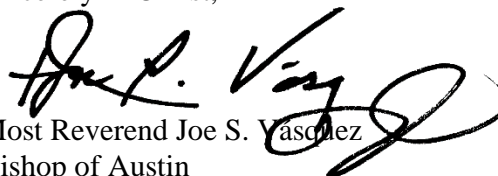
The 2024-2025 Respect Life Program begins on October 1. The program complements and continues the work of the National Eucharistic Revival, highlighting Jesus' message in John 10:10: "I came so that they might have life." Part of the impetus for the Eucharistic Revival was a concern that some Catholics do not believe, or at least do not understand, that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist. Similarly, many people do not realize or acknowledge the sanctity of human life when it is hidden in the womb. Both instances call for us to help others recognize these sacred gifts that may not be perceivable through our human senses. We need to help others understand that just because something may not be apparent to our eyes does not mean that it is not there or that it is not essential.

World Mission Sunday is October 20, and the theme chosen by Pope Francis is "Go and invite everyone to the banquet." This message, rooted in the parable of the wedding banquet, calls us to a renewed sense of mission, inviting all to partake in the Lord's feast of love and salvation. The second collection on World Mission Sunday is not merely a canonically mandatory tradition but a vital lifeline. It supports over 1,150 mission territories in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Pacific Islands, and the Middle East. Every donation is a testament to our collective commitment to the Great Commission (cf. Mt 28:19-20), a commitment of which you are an integral part. These funds are entirely devoted to evangelization efforts, including the support of seminaries, future religious sisters, catechists, Catholic schools, and healthcare centers that offer life-changing education and care to those most in need.

I invite you to be generous in supporting this annual collection. As we approach our work of evangelization, we are reminded that the Church of God is universal, not alien to any people. Evangelization is the Church's deepest identity, a particular grace and vocation proper to the People of God, as the Church exists to evangelize. Your prayers are a vital part of our shared mission, and I deeply value your spiritual support. We can continue to build heaven on earth by our love for Jesus and humanity, authenticated through your prayers and actions.

Be assured of my prayers for you and your families.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Joe S. Vasquez
Bishop of Austin