News



by Catholic News Service

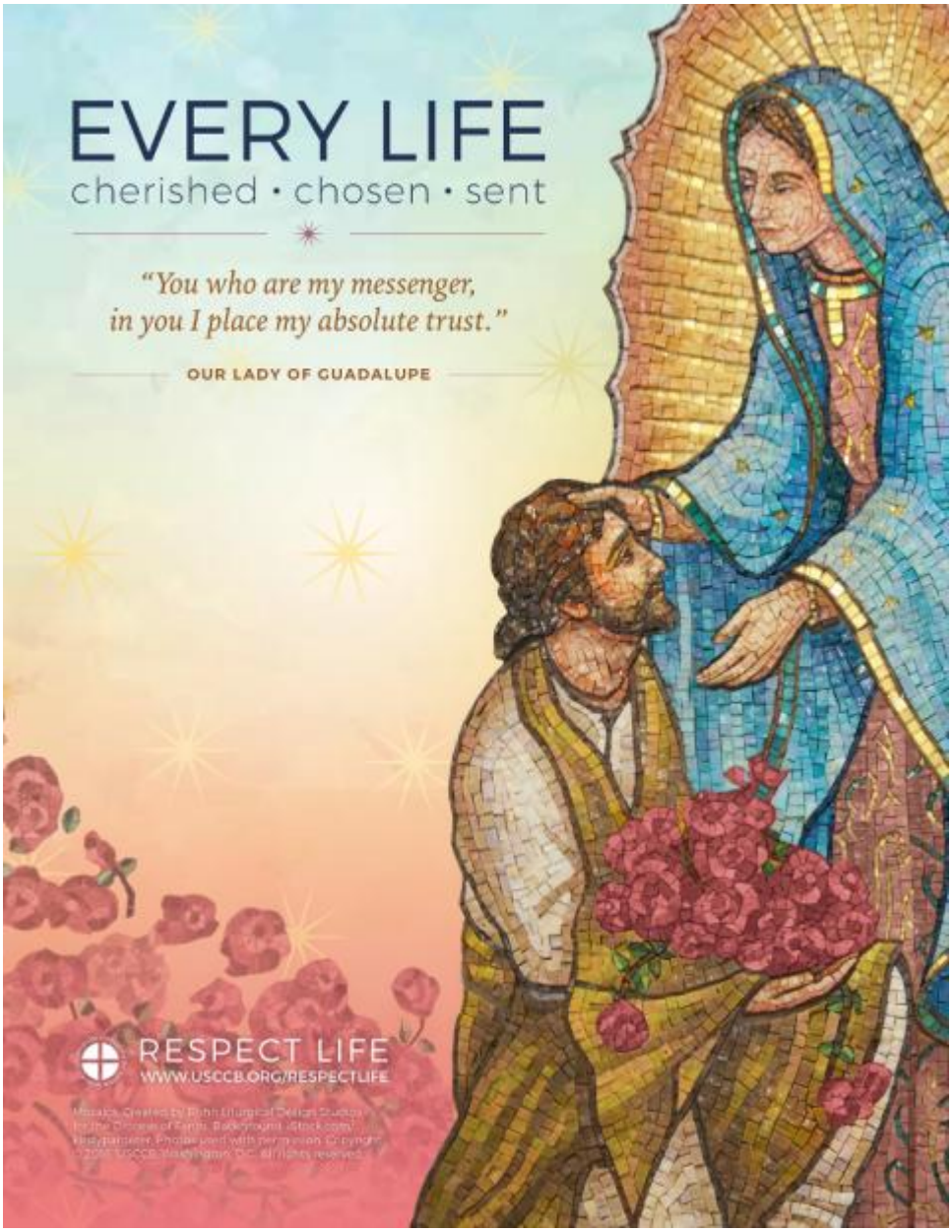
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This poster is included in the materials for the U.S. bishops' 2018-19 Respect Life Program, which is distributed by the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities. "Every Life: Cherished, Chosen, Sent" is the theme for Respect Life Month, observed in October. (CNS)

Each year the U.S. Catholic Church observes October as Respect Life Month, which calls Catholics "to cherish, defend and protect those who are most vulnerable, from the beginning of life to its end, and at every point in between," said the chairman of the bishops' pro-life committee.

For this year's pro-life observance "we become even more aware of the need for messengers of God's love and instruments of his healing" due to the clergy sex abuse crisis and other assaults on human dignity, New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan said Oct. 3.

As the church approaches Respect Life Sunday, "our hearts are heavy with revelations of how those who should be most trustworthy have not only failed in this regard but have inflicted immense evil," he said.

As Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said, "The body of Christ is lacerated," added Dolan, who heads USCCB Committee on Pro-life Activities.

The theme for this year's Respect Life Month is "Every Life: Cherished, Chosen, Sent," which highlights "our call to build a culture of life as missionary disciples, the cardinal said.

The USCCB Secretariat of Pro-life Activities provides English- and Spanish-language resources for observing the month and to use all year at www.usccb.org/respectlife. Among the resources are: the text of Dolan's statement; homily helps; intercessions; "Respect Life" images; parish bulletin inserts; a poster and reflection flyer; and pulpit announcements.

There also are articles on Catholic teaching on several life issues, including abortion, disabilities, assisted suicide, end of life, contraception and abortion healing.

This year's theme draws on the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Juan Diego. Mary appeared to him as a pregnant indigenous woman. She "sent him with miraculous flowers in his cloak to tell the bishop to build a church where people could receive her Son and her loving, tender care."

"By embracing the mission entrusted to him, St. Juan Diego helped bring Christ's transforming love to cultures gripped by oppression and death," says the reflection. "Like St. Juan Diego, let us embrace our daily mission to help others encounter God's transforming, life-giving love."

Dolan said: "We are called and sent to be messengers of God's love, treating one another as cherished and chosen by Him. In doing so, we help build a culture that respects all human life. The Body of Christ needs you. The world needs you."

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