

Homily for the Diocesan Respect Life Mass and Rosary Walk

October 11, 2025

**Holy Family Parish
Granite City, Illinois**

**†Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

Reverend Fathers and deacons, consecrated religious, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, it is good that we are here at Holy Family Parish to celebrate this Annual Diocesan Respect Life Mass, after which we will peacefully and prayerfully walk while praying the Rosary to the local abortion clinic here in Granite City. Those who are not able to participate in the Rosary Walk will be invited to stay after Mass for Eucharistic adoration here in church, where we will all have Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament when we return from the Rosary walk. Our objective today is to give witness to the dignity of all human life and to implore the assistance of God in bringing about the conversion of hearts of all those who in any way are complicit in promoting a culture of death.

We have this Annual Diocesan Respect Life Mass and Rosary Walk every year around this time because the month of October is designated Respect Life Month by the Catholic Bishops of the United States.

In his [2025 Respect Life Month statement](#), Bishop Daniel Thomas, Chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, asked Catholics to continue praying throughout October for the end of all taxpayer funding of abortion centers. In it, he said, “Each of us is called to be a witness to the Gospel of Life, proclaiming in word and deed the innate goodness and dignity of every human person.”

Pro-Life efforts across the country have seen mixed results. A provision in President Donald Trump's so-called “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” instructed the federal government to end Medicaid payments for one year to abortion providers that received more than \$800,000 from Medicaid in 2023. A federal judge in July had ruled that Planned Parenthood clinics nationwide must continue to be reimbursed for Medicaid funding, but a [U.S. appeals court](#) last month allowed the federal government to block Medicaid funds to Planned Parenthood while legal challenges continue. The U.S. Supreme Court [had ruled earlier](#) that states can bar Medicaid payments to Planned Parenthood, the nation’s largest abortion provider.

Unfortunately, the Food and Drug Administration last week [approved](#) a generic version a chemical abortion pill. This prompted former Vice-

President Mike Pence to write an [opinion piece](#) published in last Thursday's print edition of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL saying, "Mr. Trump should act swiftly to reverse this decision. Government's first duty is to protect the lives of its own citizens, born and unborn. ... The pro-life movement is rooted in the timeless truth that every human life is created in God's image. For four years, I worked proudly alongside President Trump to advance it. I pray he will stand again with the millions of Americans who cherish the unborn, and rejoin this noble cause with the same courage that defined his first term."

Both Republicans and Democrats need our prayers to work for the protection of unborn human life. We know that Democrats for years now have largely pushed most pro-life Democrats out of the Democratic Party. But last year the Republican National Convention's platform committee [voted to remove](#) the "right to life" plank and a call for a national law protecting unborn life from the party platform. For the first time in forty years, this platform does not include support for a national abortion ban. Instead, the Republicans' anti-abortion positions are softened and many of the party's previous pro-life commitments have been removed. In particular, [the committee stripped a key line](#) included in every Republican platform since 1984: "The unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life

which cannot be infringed.” Instead, [the platform states](#) that the power to pass laws on abortion is the purview of the states. It only commits the Republican Party to opposing “Late Term Abortion” and it supports access to Birth Control and In Vitro Fertilization.

I say these things not to make a political statement, but to call for prayers for all of our government officials – Republicans as well as Democrats – to respect all human life from conception to natural death.

In today’s Gospel reading from Saint Luke (Lk 11:27-28), in an outburst of enthusiasm after hearing Jesus preach, someone in the crowd shouts out a blessing on His mother. Jesus responds, “Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.” Jesus’ response to the blessing uttered on His mother carried with it no sign of disrespect. It was, rather, an occasion for Jesus to point to the purpose of all his preaching and healing. True blessedness comes from responding to Jesus’ call to put the word of God at the center of our lives and live accordingly. In fact, Mary is the model disciple. In this Respect Life Mass, then, let us pray for Mary’s intercession so that we may all live the Gospel of life as we receive her Son into our hearts.

May God give us this grace. Amen.