



Pro-Life Activities

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

DATE: September 27, 2013

FROM: Don Clemmer

O: 202-541-3206

M: 260-580-1137

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARDINAL O'MALLEY CALLS FOR COMPASSION, HOPE, ACTION IN 2013 RESPECT LIFE MONTH STATEMENT

*Respect Life Sunday opens year-long program of education, prayer, advocacy
2013-14 Respect Life Program theme: "Open your hearts to life!"
USCCB Pro-Life chairman: "Share the truth about human life"*

WASHINGTON—In a statement marking Respect Life Month, October 2013, Cardinal Seán O'Malley of Boston exhorted Catholics to "engage others and share the truth about human life." Cardinal O'Malley, chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), addressed various threats to human life and the need to entrust pro-life efforts to prayer.

Cardinal O'Malley stressed the link between a lack of faith and threats to those who are most vulnerable: "We live in a society of unbelief, where the unborn, the sick, and the elderly are often unwanted and endangered by acts of violence or neglect." He noted especially the loss of "over fifty-five million unborn children's lives" from 40 years of legalized abortion after *Roe v. Wade*, and the spread of legalized physician-assisted suicide in three states "allowing doctors to...end patients' lives rather than provide much-needed comfort in times of pain and distress."

In the face of these challenges, Cardinal O'Malley stressed hope in the love of God.

By opening our hearts to his love and mercy, we let Christ dwell in us and we see more deeply the intricate and unique beauty of each person," he said. "Though we are capable of sins against human life such as abortion, assisted suicide and euthanasia, we are not beyond Christ's mercy."

"We must personally engage others and share the truth about human life," he said. "All members of the Church can bring healing to the world by upholding the beauty of human life and God's unfailing mercy" especially to "those who have been involved in abortion."

Inspired by Pope Francis' call to all people of good will, the Respect Life Program's theme for 2013-14 is: "Open your hearts to life!" Cardinal O'Malley explained the spiritual theme. "We must respond to Pope Francis' call with great urgency. Opening our hearts to life in Christ empowers us for loving, merciful action toward others," he said, "Only a tender, compassionate love that seeks to serve those most in need, whatever the personal cost, is strong enough to overcome a culture of death and to build a civilization of love."

Begun in 1972, the Respect Life Program stresses the value and dignity of human life. It is observed in the 195 Catholic dioceses in the United States. The cardinal's full statement in English and Spanish and other Respect Life Program resources for 2013-14 may be found at www.usccb.org/respectlife.

Keywords: Pope Francis, USCCB, U.S. Catholic bishops, Cardinal Seán O'Malley, Committee on Pro-Life Activities, Respect Life Month, Respect Life Program, pro-life, abortion, *Roe v. Wade*, *Doe v. Bolton*, assisted suicide, physician-assisted death, euthanasia, end of life, illness, social justice, post-abortion healing, mercy, civilization of love, adoption, prayer,

#####

13-177

DD,Sec,DioNewspapers,CNS,RNS,Crux

USCCB Pro-Life Secretariat