

Walking with Moms in Need - A Year of Service

A Project of the Diocese of Phoenix: March 2021 - March 2022

The Diocese of Phoenix is pleased to join the nationwide effort, *Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service*, from March 25, 2021 to March 25, 2022. Inspired by St. John Paul II's call to maximize our charitable efforts in building a culture of life, the intention of the *Year of Service* is to increase the Church's outreach and assistance to pregnant and parenting women in need.

We invite ALL PARISHES to kick off the Year of Service on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord (March 25) as the Church recalls the papal encyclical "The Gospel of Life" (*Evangelium vitae*). This document reaffirmed the Church's unchanging teaching on the value and inviolability of every human life. St. John Paul II challenged us:

"With great openness and courage, we need to question how widespread is the culture of life today among individual Christians, families, groups and communities in our Dioceses. With equal clarity and determination, we must identify the steps we are called to take in order to serve life in all its truth." (EV 95)

REAL NEEDS call for REAL RESPONSE - THE STATISTICS

In response to this call, all parishes are asked to join *Walking with Moms In Need (WWMIN) - A Year of Service*- focusing on the needs of pregnant women in crisis and parenting moms in need. The challenges can be immense. According to national statistics, women who terminated their pregnancies were poor (75%), young (60%) and unmarried (86%). The majority, 62%, had a religious affiliation, and 24% were Catholic. In 2019, an Arizona Department of Health report revealed abortions increased by 5% and surgical abortions led the way with a 6% increase. For the first time ever, Hispanic women account for the majority of abortions in our state despite being only 39% of the population. Black women in Arizona had the highest rate of abortion- being only 5% of the population, they account for 10% of abortions. It is clear that minority women are at highest risk.

Pope Francis has repeatedly challenged us to go to the margins and bring hope and help to those in need. This is what Jesus expects us to do. Pope Francis says:

"It is not 'progressive' to try to resolve problems by eliminating a human life. On the other hand, it is also true that we have done little to adequately accompany women in very difficult situations, where abortion appears as a quick solution to their profound anguish... Who can remain unmoved before such painful situations?" (EG 214)



YOUR PARISH, YOUR RESPONSE



Women facing an unexpected pregnancy and parenting women in need are at the peripheries, both inside and outside our parishes. *WWMIN – A Year of Service is focused on providing real, tangible support to these women and shifting the conversation from what is often a partisan divide into pastoral unity.*

The *Year of Service* is divided into Five Phases with ample timeframes which can be modified and adjusted. The Parish Action Guide Summary provides simple, one-page instructions for completing each phase of the initiative. While each parish will participate in its own unique way, the Guide provides a basic framework and structure that can be adapted to each local parish's needs. In addition, there are specific materials and resources to help parishes participate, including sample timelines, announcements, prayers, activities, homily notes and more. All materials and templates are available online to support the parish effort and are ready-made for ease of use. (Please note there are two guides available – a SUMMARY GUIDE and a full PARISH ACTION GUIDE.)

Our Catholic communities, parishes and resources are unique. Each parish is to complete an inventory of available resources in their local area, assess the results and identify gaps. Parishes will begin planning their response based upon their assessment and decide how they can improve outreach in their community. Parishes with different resources will have different responses. The below examples are very general and given only as a start to a parish leadership conversation:

- ➔ **“TYPE A” Parish Response** – have strong people resources and a readiness to maximize the outreach effort. This parish may have many charitable outreach ministries and active volunteers.
- ➔ **“TYPE B” Parish Response** – have moderate people resources and a willingness to develop a strong outreach effort. This parish may have some ministries and people who want to get involved.
- ➔ **“TYPE C” Parish Response** – have minimal people resources and a desire to participate in an outreach effort. This parish may have to recruit new volunteers to lead and help.

ALL PASTORS ARE BEING CALLED BY BISHOP OLMSTED TO COMPLETE, AT MINIMUM, THESE REQUIREMENTS:

- a. Appoint a *Walking with Moms in Need* parish coordinator
- b. Complete the Inventory Tool to assess community resources and needs
- c. Develop a Parish Response based upon the inventory assessment (at a minimum, create and publish a list of resources to help moms in crisis)
- d. Communicate & Publish parish outreach plan for pregnant/parenting women in need

May our combined diocesan charity and justice efforts result in a rising Diocese of Phoenix – where every woman in need can turn for help and active support from us, Christ's Catholic Church.