



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

October 5/6, 2019

Dear friends in Christ,

This year's theme for Respect Life month is, "Christ Our Hope in Every Season of Life." In our first reading for this weekend, Habakkuk cries out, "'Violence!' but you do not intervene. Why do you let me see ruin; why must I look at misery? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and clamorous discord." How true this lament still is in our world today! Every day we hear of ideas or witness actions that attack the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person, whether it be new laws which diminish the unborn, gun violence in our schools and neighborhoods, or hateful rhetoric and discord. These are **all** attacks on the dignity and value of every person that God has created.

From the time we were first formed in our mother's womb until the time we take our final breath, each "season" of our lives is God's gift. As evidenced by the four seasons here in Michigan, each season is not the same. Each one brings challenges and trials, but each season also brings us new opportunities to increase our faith and believe in Christ Our Hope. Hope is willing to trust. Hope always confidently looks forward!

The Church teaches us that "the one who has hope lives differently" (*Spe salvi* 2). Christian hope can lift us in times of discouragement and guide us in reaffirming our commitment to protect all human life. Hope reassures us that Lord is present with us every step of the way!

I thank those parishes, schools, and institutions throughout our diocese who participate in the Respect Life program during this month and who make respect life efforts a priority throughout the year. Building a culture of life is an indispensable part of our calling as Christians.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ David J. Walkowiak
Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids