

*"And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.'" - Luke 2:10*

Dear Friends for Life,

As we begin a new year and a new decade, we are excited to announce a dramatically re-structured Respect Life Office with a renewed vision. We are so grateful to Bishop Barres, Fr. McCartney, Fr. Fasano and Sr. Maryanne for the quiet but diligent preparation over the last several months that has brought Donna Crean and me to lead the Office along with the persevering Pat Fox (who has singlehandedly run Project Rachel) and Ashley Foster (who has maintained a Respect Life presence through the monthly newsletters).

So many of you already know Donna, but for those who have not had that fortune yet, Donna brings to the Office extraordinary gifts of intelligence, compassion, and charity borne of a deep Catholic faith and honed during an extensive experience ministering to pregnant women bewildered and deceived by a culture of death, and helping to heal the heartbreakin g wounds caused by abortion. To know Donna is to see a living example of the Beatitudes. She will serve as Assistant Director/Program Coordinator.

As a physician of Geriatric Medicine, my experience in practice and especially at the bedside confronting end of life issues, witnessing alongside many of you at Respect Life events as well as public speaking on related topics over the years, brings a complementary perspective and set of skills for my role as Director. I recently completed the National Catholic Certification Program in Health Care Ethics with distinction which will play a critical role in the future of the Office.

Our great hope is that, under the mantle of Our Blessed Mother, you will behold a renewed spirit to the Respect Life Office in the coming months. Indeed, as the Office undergoes this momentous transformation, striving to meet more deeply and expansively the expectations for advancing life issues from the Catholic perspective, a new name seemed most appropriate. The Respect Life Office will now be known formally as the Office of Human Life, Family and Bioethics which better conveys the direction and purpose we have.

Shortly, we will be meeting with Deanery Coordinators and Parish Respect Life Leaders, so that we can discuss the expanded vision we have for the Office: building on existing programs, undertaking initiatives in areas with unmet needs, and developing a new emphasis on bioethics to address the increasingly complex

challenges we face when Catholic moral teaching clashes with culture and scientific advancement. We cannot do it without you! In this, we ask for your prayers and patience as we strive to reinvigorate the Office and the mission to uphold the sanctity of each and every human life -- for we are created in His Image and Likeness, and made for greatness!

On behalf of the Office of Human Life, Family and Bioethics, I wish you and your families a most blessed and hope-filled New Year! We look forward to working with you in the coming years and growing holier in Christ through Mary, our Mother.

God bless you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa A. Honkanen, M.D." The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "L" and "A" at the beginning.

Lisa A. Honkanen, M.D.