



# PARISH ACTION GUIDE SUMMARY

Pregnant and parenting moms in need are in our parishes and our neighborhoods. As Pope Francis reminds us, our parishes need to be “islands of mercy in the midst of the sea of indifference.” Everyone in the parish community should know where to refer a pregnant woman in need. As the Church celebrates the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Evangelium vitae (The Gospel of Life)*, we are inspired by St. John Paul II’s call in this prophetic document to assess our efforts in building a culture of life and to increase our outreach to pregnant and parenting women in need.

The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of *Evangelium vitae* gives us a wonderful opportunity to assess, expand, and communicate resources to pregnant moms and families in need. Parishes across the country, through the support of their bishops and pastors, are invited to join a nationwide effort entitled, ***Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service***.

The Archdiocese of Miami will be officially participating from July 16, 2020 through October 31, 2021. Through this initiative, parishes are asked to complete a simple inventory of the resources currently available in their assigned Archdiocesan Pregnancy Help Centers, assess the results and identify gaps, and plan and implement a parish response based on their findings. The Year of Service for the Archdiocese of Miami is broken up into 7 phases of parish action. The 7 phases include:

- **Phase 1:** Announce the *Year of Service* and Build a Core Team (July 16, 2020)
- **Phase 2:** Launch the Parish Inventory Process (September 26, 2020)
- **Phase 3:** Share Inventory Results and Begin Assessment and Planning (November 1, 2020)
- **Phase 4:** Announce and Commit to your Parish Response (December 12, 2020)
- **Phase 5:** Implement Parish Plans (January 22, 2021)
- **Phase 6:** Measure and Evaluate the Implementation of Parish Plans (June 11, 2021)
- **Phase 7:** Celebrate Parish Plans and Respect Life Ministry at the National *Congreso pro Vida* in Miami (October 29-31, 2021)

This Parish Action Guide Summary is provided to assist parishes in participating in the *Year of Service*. This 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, this Action Guide Summary provides a basic framework and structure that can be adapted to each local Church’s needs. Through the combined efforts of parishes nationwide, we hope to move closer to the day when every pregnant woman in need knows where to turn for help, and abortion is simply unthinkable.

# PHASE 1

## Announce the Year of Service and Build a Core Team

**July 16, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 2020**

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Here is a list of simple steps to guide you through Phase 1 of the Year of Service. These steps offer ideas to get this initiative started in your parish community.

During Phase 1 pastors are asked to select a parish leader for the initiative who will then begin assembling a parish core team to help complete the parish inventory and related tasks.

During this phase, parishes also learn and celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), highlighting its call to serve pregnant and parenting moms in need.

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### **1. Appoint a parish leader.**

The pastor of each participating parish is asked to appoint at least one parish leader for the *Year of Service*. The parish leader acts as a main point of contact with the Archdiocesan Respect Life Office and coordinator for the initiative. Most parishes already have a Respect Life “Parish Representative” who acts as a liaison between the parish, the parish’s assigned Pregnancy Help Center, and the Archdiocesan Respect Life Office. It is recommended that the Pastor meet with his Parish Representative and then determine what role he would like the Representative to have on the Parish Team.

### **2. Begin assembling a parish core team.**

Once a parish leader has been selected, he or she, with the guidance of the pastor, can begin assembling a parish core team. The core team will meet throughout the *Year of Service* and complete various tasks, including the parish inventory, assessment, and response planning and implementation.

### **3. Establish a parish support network.**

In addition to assembling a core team, you will also want to begin establishing a broader group to help support the *Year of Service*. In the beginning stages of this project, you will likely only need assistance from your core team. However, as the project continues, grows, and develops, you will likely need wider parish support across many ministries. Establishing a simple support network allows you to inspire broader parish involvement and enlist assistance during later phases of the *Year of Service*.

### **4. Announce the Year of Service and the *Evangelium Vitae* anniversary.**

In this phase, announce the *Evangelium Vitae* anniversary and *Year of Service* within your parish community. Encourage your pastor, priests, and deacons to include this exciting news in their weekend homily.

### **5. Pray for pregnant mothers in need as a parish community.**

When announcing the *Year of Service*, use this opportunity to pray the “[Prayer for Pregnant Mothers](#)” together as a community and to encourage regular use of the prayer. Include intercessions for pregnant mothers in the Prayer of the Faithful during Sunday Masses this year.

### **6. Begin planning your first core team meeting.**

Even if your core team is not fully assembled, begin thinking about when your team can gather for the first time. Consult current members of the core team about their availability and what days and times generally work best with their schedules. Begin thinking about your agenda as Pastor and what you might hope to accomplish in this initial gathering.

# PHASE 2

## Launch the Parish Inventory Process

September 26, Saint Pope Paul VI, 2020



*Here is a list of simple steps to guide you through Phase 2 of the Year of Service. These steps offer ideas on how to use the provided materials to begin the inventory process in your parish community - feel free to adjust and adapt as needed!*

*During Phase 2 parishes will continue to assemble their core teams through personal invitations and expand their parish support network.*

*Phase 2 also launches the parish inventory process and utilizes weekend Masses to pray for pregnant women in need.*

### **1. Host the first meeting with your core team.**

Once your core team has been assembled, begin thinking about when your team can gather for the first time. Consult members about their availability and what days and times generally work best with their schedules. Begin thinking about your agenda as Pastor and what you might hope to accomplish in this initial gathering to successfully launch your team.

### **2. Gather resources and information from the Archdiocese.**

Before beginning your parish inventory, contact the Archdiocesan Respect Life Office. Many pregnancy resources are appropriately coordinated at the diocesan or regional level. Your diocesan office may already have completed its own diocesan inventory and be able to provide you with a list of resources within the diocese. This list will be a great resource for you as you complete your parish inventory.

### **3. Review the inventory tool.**

The ADOM Parish Inventory Tool provides a framework and structure to help your parish think about the various resources that a mother in need may find helpful. Using the inventory tool, each parish is asked to identify the local pregnancy help resources in their community that are currently available to a woman facing a difficult pregnancy. The needs of pregnant and parenting moms can be overwhelming and the sources for help may not be apparent to those most needing support. Take time to familiarize yourself with the inventory tool.

### **4. Begin the inventory process.**

The purpose of the inventory process is to find out what resources are currently available and allow you to assess these resources and identify possible gaps. Through site visits to your assigned Pregnancy Center, phone calls, and research, begin filling out the ADOM Parish Inventory Tool. You may want to divide up different sections and assign them to core team members to research and report back to the group. Once the information has been gathered, both individually and as a group, compile everything into the inventory tool.

### **5. Schedule your Team Visit to your Pregnancy Help Center.**

Touring your assigned Pregnancy Help Center will assist your entire core Team in learning about many aspects of the Respect Life Ministry. There will be special times for Parish Teams to tour the centers, meet the staff, learn about the various programs, and hear about the stories of being involved in Respect Life Ministry. After the tour, your core Team will be able to better identify the needs and begin to determine how your Parish can best help.

# PHASE 3



## Share Inventory Results & Begin Assessment and Planning

*November 1, 2020, All Saints*

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*Here is a list of simple steps to guide you through Phase 3 of the Year of Service – feel free to adjust and adapt as needed! These steps offer ideas on how to use the provided materials to assess your inventory results, identify gaps, and begin planning how the parish can respond. During Phase 3, parishes are also encouraged to share the results of the inventory with their community in a parish-wide meeting and invite parishioner feedback and involvement in the parish response.*

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### **1. Review the inventory results and evaluate your findings.**

Gather with your core team to review and assess the results of your completed parish inventory. During this time, you will evaluate the current resources, identify gaps, and discuss how help is currently communicated to women in need. Begin creating a concise overview that can be shared with your pastor and larger parish community.

### **2. Review sample ideas and begin planning your parish response.**

Once your core team has evaluated the inventory results, take time to consider ideas for a parish response. Think about the gaps you identified and consider ways your parish might decide to address them. Generate a list of ideas that you could propose to your pastor and parish community to better serve mothers in need. Some sample ideas to support your assigned Archdiocesan Pregnancy Help Center include hosting a: 1) Baby Bottle Drive; 2) Volunteer Drive; 3) Baby Shower; 4) Holy Hour/ Prayer Vigil.

### **3. Announce inventory completion and invite parishioners to parish-wide meeting.**

In collaboration with your pastor, plan to share the inventory results with the broader community in a parish-wide meeting on a specified date. Announce the completion of the inventory, and invite parishioners to a parish-wide meeting in the coming weeks to review the findings and get their input. Encourage your pastor, priests, and deacons to include this exciting news in their weekend homilies.

### **4. Plan and host the parish-wide meeting.**

Before the parish-wide gathering, meet with your pastor to review the inventory results and proposed parish responses that you’re planning to present. Discuss plans for facilitating this larger gathering and collecting parishioner feedback. At the parish-wide meeting, share inventory findings, highlight identified gaps, and discuss possible parish responses. Use this gathering to also invite greater volunteer assistance.

### **5. Determine plans for offering and communicating help to mothers in need.**

With your pastor and core team, review your inventory results and the feedback from the broader parish community. Work together to determine a plan for an appropriate parish response. Share your inventory results and plans for response with your Diocesan Contact Person, Rebecca Brady, Director of Respect Life Ministry ([rbrady@theadom.org](mailto:rbrady@theadom.org)).

# PHASE 4



## Announce and Commit to Parish Response

### January 22, 2021, Day of Prayer & Fasting for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children

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*Here is a list of simple steps to guide you through Phase 4 of the Year of Service. These steps offer ideas on how to use the provided materials to announce your determined parish response to the larger parish community. Parishes are again encouraged to host a parish-wide meeting and invite parishioner involvement in efforts to offer and communicate help to mothers in need.*

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#### **1. Share the plans for your parish response with the parish community.**

Announce the completion of plans for your parish response, and invite all parishioners to a parish-wide meeting. In collaboration with your pastor, use the parish-wide meeting to inform parishioners about your plans to assist mothers in need and invite them to get involved. Encourage your pastor, priests, and deacons to include this exciting news in their weekend homilies.

#### **2. Continue to pray for pregnant mothers in need as a parish community.**

When announcing the upcoming parish-wide meeting, use this opportunity to pray the “Prayer for Pregnant Mothers” together as a community and to encourage regular use of the prayer. Include intercessions for pregnant mothers and your parish efforts in the Prayer of the Faithful during Sunday Masses.

#### **3. Develop a communications plan to share your efforts with those in need.**

Once your parish plans have been determined, gather with your core team to discuss how you can communicate your ongoing efforts to parishioners and those most in need of assistance. It is essential that the community knows the ways your parish is working to serve pregnant women and families in need.

#### **4. Begin implementation of the parish plans.**

In collaboration with your pastor and the Archdiocesan Office of Respect Life Ministry, begin implementing your parish plans. Engage the help of the core team, parish support network members, and new volunteers. A parish response could range from listing your Archdiocesan pregnancy help center in the parish bulletin to a more substantial commitment to launch a new ministry or effort. Some plans will require additional meetings and volunteer trainings.

#### **5. Get involved—do something!**

Getting yourself, your core team, and parish support network members more involved and connected with existing Archdiocesan Respect Life Ministry efforts will better equip you to implement your parish plans. You have to start somewhere!