



Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

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Webinar: Introduction to *Walking with Moms in Need* Wednesday, July 29, 2020

[00:00:00]

(*Kat Talalas*) We would like to begin this webinar with a prayer. I hope you can all join me.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Blessed Mother, you received the good news of the incarnation of Christ, your Son, with faith and trust. Grant your protection to all pregnant mothers facing difficulties.

Guide us as we strive to make our parish communities places of welcome and assistance for mothers in need. Help us become instruments of God's love and compassion.

Mary, Mother of the Church, graciously help us build a culture of life and a civilization of love, together with all people of good will, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(<https://www.walkingwithmoms.com/prayer-for-pregnant-mothers>)

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Welcome! We're so thrilled that so many of you have signed up to learn more about *Walking with Moms in Need*. I'm so grateful for your presence here, for your commitment of time, your interest, your desire to serve women in need—because there are so many women in need, especially at this time with all that's happening with the COVID crisis and the things that are happening with the isolation and all the other risks out there. So, it's especially important now, and we're really grateful that you care.

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We want to talk a little bit about *Walking with Moms in Need* in this webinar. It'll hopefully be a really good basis, a good grounding in what this is—what is *Walking with Moms in Need* a year of service—and give you basically everything that you need to get this started at your parish and to begin to walk with women in your communities.

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So, to give you a little bit of information, *Walking with Moms in Need* is a year of service. Really though, it's a year of preparation where Catholic parishes, like yours, “walk in the shoes” of local pregnant and parenting women in need.

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The USCCB and the Catholic Church, as far as we know, has never done anything quite like this before—basically, this nationwide, yet parish-based kind of initiative, and it's really entirely focused around serving vulnerable pregnant and parenting women.

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Walking with Moms in Need, as you'll find out, is a deliberate process. And it's also a whole church response that seeks to engage everyone in the parish, everyone sitting in the pews—not just the pro-life committee over here, the social justice committee over there, but really everybody, so that all know and are available to women who might be looking for support, friendship, and the things that they need to welcome life and to embrace their maternity.

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We are really hoping that through this year of service, parishes will become communities that surround women and walk with them as sisters, that embraces them in their need, but also as friends, and that that community element is kept paramount.

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We are very hopeful, too, that this year of service will raise awareness, generally, of the needs of pregnant and parenting women—especially those who are facing financial difficulty or other forms of vulnerability, and that it will raise awareness about the Church's desire to help and serve them—and all of the wonderful myriad of social ministries and organizations and service agencies that have (whether it is medical care available or food assistance, housing assistance) all the things that really are there to serve women who might be in need.

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We want this year of service to position parishes as the local sources for help to vulnerable moms and as a community, again that will really walk with them as sisters; but to clarify, this is really not about turning parishes into pregnancy centers. We admire the wonderful work that pregnancy centers do and so, we really hope to enhance referrals to the pregnancy care centers where they exist—because not every parish has a pregnancy care center nearby, but where they exist— and to build those relationships with helping agencies and see where the gaps are and again, how they can surround women with love and community.

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And just to tie this up, so you're not still staring at this slide, I just want to say to everyone listening here that the Church really needs your particular gifts, your talents, your experience, and that you are here for a reason and that you have so much to give to an initiative like this, to help get us started and to help move it forward. And we'll give you all the tools that you need to get started. And, never fear; God will equip the called.

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So, just a little agenda for our time together. We're going to give you some more of a vision and background for *Walking with Moms in Need*. We'll explain how to walk with moms in need in your parish, we'll give you some updates and information on the impact of COVID-19 and how that might influence how you do *Walking with Moms in Need*, when you do *Walking with Moms in Need*, and also hopefully answer your questions.

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So again, giving you a little bit more of the vision of why we're doing this... Why is the Pro-Life Secretariat, the Bishops' Conference pushing this *Walking with Moms in Need* year of service thing?

Our vision and goals:

1. We want to improve and better communicate help to pregnant women in need.
2. We want to inspire and engage parishes in a whole church and life-affirming initiative that really brings everyone in and everyone together, whether you're pro-life, social justice, not really engaged. We want to have everyone kind of come together around a common goal.
3. And we want to inspire parishioners to get involved in a new vision of what it means to live the Gospel of Life.

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The Need

We know that, especially now, more than ever, there are a lot of vulnerable women out there who are in difficult pregnancies, challenging pregnancies, unexpected pregnancies. Maybe they're parenting young children already. And they're going through a tough time, especially now. *Walking with Moms in Need* started before COVID happened, so this isn't new. But certainly, the timing is quite fortuitous because these needs are only increasing.

Whether it is a woman who has lost her job and now has an unexpected pregnancy and doesn't know what to do; whether it's somebody who has, maybe, uncertain immigration status and is worried about that, and then faces a pregnancy that she doesn't expect; or, it could be a couple who is experiencing a challenging prenatal diagnosis, and they don't really know what to do, especially in these uncertain times.

So, we know that these moms are in our parishes and they're in our neighborhoods. And we know that, as Pope Francis says, our parishes need to be "islands of mercy in the midst of a sea of indifference."

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What we'd like to have happen is for any woman who is facing a challenging or unexpected pregnancy, or who's parenting young children in difficult circumstances, to know that the Church is a place where she can find help.

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But do Catholics have an accurate picture of what is available, and how do we effectively communicate what is available? Do we know what the gaps are in the available resources? There are a lot of questions here.

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There are over seventeen thousand parishes in the U.S. Wouldn't it be awesome if we knew that everyone in a parish community would be able to refer, help, walk with a woman in need, a pregnant woman in need?

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So, I want to share this quote with you from Pope St. John Paul II's *Evangelium vitae*, which really reiterates this call for parishes and dioceses to examine whether life is really welcomed in the Catholic community. He writes:

“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.”

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And so, that brings us to our “ask” for you tonight. Those words were written twenty-five years ago, pretty much to the day. Pope John Paul II's *Evangelium vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*) was published in March twenty-five years ago. And this year of the Gospel of life, we feel, gives us an opportunity to really assess, expand, and communicate resources to pregnant moms and families in need, and to answer that call of really how welcoming we really are. The USCCB, accordingly, has developed resources and is inviting dioceses, parishes, and organizations to join in a nationwide year of service entitled *Walking with Moms in Need*.

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Good news! Over a third of dioceses have already signed up for this and are already committed, which is great. And many Catholic organizations have committed to supporting this, because again, it is unprecedented. We haven't really tried to bring everyone together—parishes, dioceses, Catholic organizations, Catholic hospitals together—quite like with this *Walking with Moms in Need* year of service.

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So, now that we've explained a little bit about what this is, we're going to, hopefully, explain step-by-step how you can bring this to your parish, because we really are hopeful that you will. And I know that what's going to come in the next fifteen, twenty minutes or so might sound like a lot, but it's important to remember that this is intended to be over time.

So, *Walking with Moms in Need* fundamentally is a process, not just completing a checklist. It's not just getting to the goal. It's a process of engaging an entire parish in this—getting your pastor involved, getting people involved from who might never have done these kinds of things before, starting something new; and that takes time. So again, this process, we don't want to intimidate you, we're going to give you what you need, but it's just to give you an overview of what an entire year of living this out would look like.

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So, this process of *Walking with Moms in Need* will include things like enlisting new leadership at the parish to do something like this. That might mean that you decide to take up the mantle

and talk to your pastor and get this ball rolling. It will mean identifying resources and building relationships with local helping agencies in your community. Maybe there was a Catholic Charities, again a great Catholic hospital, or some other sort of local food bank—all those kinds of resources. It might be discerning more effective ways of letting people know about the great pregnancy resource center in their back yard or other things that are locally available. And certainly, it will involve getting the parish involved and getting people motivated to take a look at this need and what they can do about it.

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Ultimately, it will hopefully involve committing to new parish efforts to walk with moms in need, and that will be a really exciting thing to see. There's a reason it's a year; there's plenty of time to go through all these steps.

And I will switch over to Chelsy, who is going to walk you through more of our website and actually how to go through this process, give you some more background on the timing, and help you begin to start to see how you would start taking these steps.

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(Chelsy Gomez) Thanks Kat! So, we're going to dive right in and take a closer look at some of the resources, the website, and what's available to you to help you join us in this year service.

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So, if you haven't had a chance to check this out yet, this is the *Walking with Moms in Need* website. This is our home page. So, definitely if you haven't had a chance, feel free to poke around and see what all this has to offer.

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We're going to just focus on a couple sections of the website that are going to be most essential for you getting started at the parish level. So, appropriately, you'll just go to the "Get Started" tab, and you'll see underneath there are the "Parish Resources." So, that's where we're going to start today.

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As Kat said, the great thing is we've created lots of resources for you to hopefully make this as easy as possible to implement. That being said, we don't want you to be overwhelmed by the number of resources. So, one of the reasons for doing this webinar is to really walk you through them, so that you know what's there and it doesn't have to be an overwhelming thing or feel like you're trying to figure it out alone.

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So first off, there are just really three main resources. The centerpiece of the initiative, and for you doing work at the parish level, is going to be this "Parish Action Guide"—it really is your "one stop shop." It has really everything you need; it has timelines, announcements, prayers, activities, homily notes, it links to other supplemental resources. That being said, because it has everything, and we tried to put it all in one document so you've got it all in one place, it's long. So, if you are overwhelmed by the seventy-eight pages, take a breath. It's okay.

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We also created this “Parish Action Guide Summary.” I’ll just go ahead and open that up real briefly. It’s just going to give you a one-page overview of each phase of the year of service, which is broken into five—we’ll get into that a little in just a moment—but it just gives you a one-page summary. It’s a six-page document, instead of seventy-eight, so that’s a place to start.

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The other essential resource is going to be the “Parish Inventory Tool.” You’ll really utilize this in Phase 2 and Phase 3. But if you want to get a peek at what’s coming, that’s there for you. With those three resources, you can do pretty much everything you’re going to need to do.

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So, let’s go ahead and just dive into the action guide a little bit, and we can explore that together. Right at the beginning, you can see, as we’ve said, that *Walking with Moms in Need* is a process, and it’s broken into phases so that you can accomplish the different tasks systematically, together; you can plan for it. And when it comes to timelines, if you need more time, that’s okay. So, don’t feel overwhelmed by that factor either.

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So, first of all, at the parish level, you’re going to start at Phase 1, which really is announcing your parish’s participation and starting to build that core team. Once you’ve got your core team assembled and you’ve started to build your parish support and excitement for the initiative, then, in Phase 2 is when you’ll launch that inventory process. That’s when you’re going to actually do a lot of the effort and the work to find the resources in your local area, to work with your diocesan director, to work with your pastor and your core team, to see what’s out there and to begin identifying some of those gaps, some of the needs that aren’t being met.

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And in Phase 3, you’re going to take the results from your completed inventory, start assessing them and thinking about what you can do to fill those gaps and start making some plans. And you’ll share those results with the wider parish community (because the inventory is going to be done by the core team).

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In Phase 4, then you’re going to really decide on how your parish wants to respond. You’ve done inventory, you’ve gotten the lay of the land, you’ve identified the gaps, and then you’re going to decide, “What does our parish want to do about it? What gap can we fill? Or, if we can’t completely eliminate a gap, how can we make it smaller? How can we build bridges to help accompany moms through that?” So, you’ll also announce that and share it with your parish community.

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And in Phase 5, which is super exciting, you finally get to just celebrate all the great work you’ve done and start implementing those incredible plans and just seeing how the Holy Spirit’s going to move and unfold before you. So, that’s just a really quick overview of the phases.

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Now, we want to walk through the introduction in the action guide, which provides a little more background. Kat did a great job of giving you some of that information. This just spells it out a little bit more.

We look at some of the challenges that mothers face and the demographics, really going a little bit more into the vision.

This is the original timeline. Obviously, this is pre-COVID, so we'll come back to that in a little bit, but an overall timeline is there. And once again, that is meant for adaptation.

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We're coming to Phase 1. So, each phase of action guide follows a very similar layout and pattern. Each phase is going to start with those very simple steps that are going to guide you through. It's basically the same thing that is in the action guide summary. This just gives you a bird's eye view of small steps and tasks you're going to accomplish. In Phase 1, there are six of them. So, that's just the easy way to take it in bite-sized pieces. So, each section of the action guide—each phase—will have just the simple steps.

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We'll also provide sample announcements that you can use to share with the parish community. We've done longer form, some more condensed versions—if you're limited on bulletin space or newsletter space, you can still get the word out. You can use these as pulpit announcements, too. If you have things like Flocknote, or any other parish communication tools, Facebook pages, we give you the text, and then you can customize it and adapt it. But, a lot of the work is hopefully done for you.

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Each phase also will have a number of sample intercessions that will guide your parish prayerfully through the year of service, as they focus on different challenges faced by women and mothers in need. The intercessions also will specifically pray for your parish community and your involvement and the guidance of the Holy Spirit and success of *Walking with Moms* in your local parish community.

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We also have included homily helps for each phase that will help your pastor, priests, and deacons to share about *Walking with Moms in Need* within the community at Mass. We know that, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, so many priests are live-streaming. So, it's just a beautiful way to still build that connection and build that momentum. Even if you're not able to physically gather, or if the whole community is not able to physically gather together at this time, these can still be useful.

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Depending on the phase, we have some sample activities. For example, Phase 1 features the beautiful prayer that we opened with. Prayer cards are available, and we really would encourage

your parish to purchase those and make them available. Normally, we would say to keep them in the pews. But we know we're dealing with COVID-19, and we know there are restrictions. But, all the more, people can take them home with them. That's also beautiful, too. And, hopefully, things will go the way that we can we can eventually use those things in Mass again safely.

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And then, after those basic things, each phase will then go into the specifics of the tasks you'll be completing. For example, this is actually a resource for pastors. It's to select the parish leader because that's really the starting point. This particular resource was written for pastors, so that's a great thing to share with your priest if you're talking to them and they don't know where to start.

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But then the action guide will help you walk through things like, building a parish core team. How do you do that? How do you discern? How do you personally invite and engage people who maybe haven't been involved in parish activities before? Because, as Kat said, we want this to expand beyond just the usual pro-life community and Respect Life committee. We really want to bring in as many people as possible to help women in need. So, this is truly a whole parish and a whole church response.

So, there's all these different resources. And each phase will have those ones that are specific to it.

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So, I'm going take you back now, once again, to that "Parish Resources" page. So, those resources that we just covered are kind of the macro level. Those are the main three resources. So, if you're overwhelmed by the number of links and buttons on the website, those are kind of the lay of the land. And just to emphasize once again, really, *everything* is in that action guide.

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However, if you go once again to that "Get Started" tab, underneath you'll see for a link for "Tools and Templates." This provides some of the micro level resources so that you can really hit the ground running and so that you don't have to reinvent the wheel.

If you're new to doing any kind of leadership role or ministry, these really give you all the tools you need. In case you've never led a meeting before or structured an agenda, we're providing sample ones. If you're not sure quite how to invite someone, we have an email invite template. If you decide you want to do a "sign-up Sunday," when we can safely do those things again, there are sign-up sheets that you can just print and go. So, we've tried to think of everything that you'll need.

We'll continue to add to this page throughout the year, especially if we get requests for more specific resources. And, like I said, the great thing is all of these resources, all these templates are also linked to in the action guide in the specific section where you're going to utilize them. And sometimes you might go back and use something again, and that's okay too. That's why that action guide is so long; it's because it's chock full of everything that we tried to think of.

So, we'll continue to add communications tools. Kat's, I think, planning some webinars on how to get the word out in the media and how to work with local media. So, there'll be great things like that, which will continue to be put out. Most of those steps come in later phases, anyway. So, there's plenty of time.

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We're also producing educational materials. Some of those are up, and we'll continue to add to them throughout the year to really dive into what it means to serve mothers in need and what we're called to do as Catholics. I think that's a pretty good overview of the website and those phases.

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(*Kat*) Alright, thank you Chelsy. So, thank you again for walking through the resources. This is awesome. But, do you have any information—again, this is a lot to look at, and you've explained the most important things—but can you just reiterate how those who are joining us, maybe they joined a little late, how they can get started? What are the most important things so they can get going with us?

(*Chelsy*) Kat, that's a great question because even with all these resources and the steps, it can still feel like, "Wait, where do I start?" So, if you feel this way you are not alone. We've gotten those questions already.

The first thing you can do, and you're kind of already doing it, is familiarize yourself with the *Walking with Moms in Need* process and the tools that are available. Flip through the action guide. It's long so you don't need to read it cover-to-cover but read through that introduction and look through the first phase. Look through the action guide summary. Just see what's out there. Explore the website. Make sure that you understand what *Walking with Moms in Need* is and how you can serve and bring it to your parish.

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After you are familiar, then the next thing is really two-fold. You'll want to talk to your pastor, and also [contact your diocese](#). First of all, talk to your pastor about getting started, especially if you haven't started this at your parish yet. We know some of you may have already been appointed as the parish leader by your pastor, and in so many ways, you're ahead of the game. That's great. And we're so thankful for you and for saying yes.

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For those of you that maybe you're the one that has to initiate this at your parish, talk to your pastor. See if he's heard anything about it. Especially with COVID-19, it's been especially challenging on pastors. We know that so many people are overwhelmed and trying to keep their parishes afloat. So, just bring it to his attention, and let him know, first and foremost, that you're willing to help and you're willing to guide him through the process—that you're willing to make it work, and that it doesn't have to be a huge drag on his time. So, talk with him and just really build that relationship and see if he thinks it's something that your parish can participate in.

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The other thing is to contact your diocese and your diocesan director. Many dioceses have a pro-life point person. Sometimes it's a specific role, but other times they're wearing three different hats. We do have a listing of diocesan contacts on our website:

<https://www.usccb.org/committees/pro-life-activities/diocesan-pro-life-offices>. And that is a listing of how to get in contact with a Respect Life contact in your diocese.

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Now, just keep in mind the USCCB is transitioning their website this week to a new platform. So, there may be some technical glitches for the next week or so. We're going to be checking that and trying to fix any of those, but some will be beyond our control. So, we just appreciate your patience. If the site's not working and you really want to just get started, you can always go on your diocesan website and do a quick Google search. And if all else fails, just give your diocese a call and ask who they could direct you to in regard to Respect Life issues.

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So, the reason you really want to talk to your diocese, is that, as Kat said, a third of dioceses have already committed, which means you have the support of your bishop, you have a diocesan contact person that has been appointed that can help you, that can field your questions. So, you really want to start there and see what your diocese is doing.

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Your diocese may be completely on board. Your diocese might not yet be, and that's okay, too. Some are definitely going to join later. Especially with all the challenges that the pandemic has brought, we expect this only to grow. And we're just so excited already, that even amidst all these challenging circumstances, a third of them have already said yes.

And, for the ones that haven't said yes, the fact that you are reaching out and asking about it means that they might, and then there will be even more support because you'll be working with them on how to get it started in the diocese. So, we really encourage you to just reach out to them because it can't hurt either way.

It's wonderful if they hear from people from parishes. It might be that bishops have a lot going on, and it might have slipped their mind. And you have a coordinator, someone else, that can advocate at the diocesan level. So, just build that relationship. It's so important.

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And especially if your diocese has joined, and even maybe if they haven't, they're still going to be a great resource for you. Often, they're going to already know some of the resources that are out there. They can help you get started. They can help you in inviting pastors and parishes to get on board and encouraging them to seek out new leaders. They can highlight some of those helpful programs and resources. And, also really important... They can help you navigate and flag any problematic agencies, organizations, or resources that may not be appropriate to work with. There is more of that in the action guide, guiding you through that process of discernment. But, they are really great resource for vetting sources, double-checking, and flagging anything that would not ultimately be what a mother in need will find helpful. So, they are great resources. To get started today, you're already doing it, you're on the webinar. Dive into those resources a

little more. Do some bedtime reading, some quarantine reading if you're still in quarantine. Then, reach out to your pastor, to your diocesan contact person. Even with COVID-19, send an email. Do a phone call. Whatever you can do; it doesn't have to be face-to-face, even if that's what we'd prefer.

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(Kat) Chelsy, speaking of COVID-19, I have a question that's in everyone's mind, especially because the action guide and *Walking with Moms in Need* was created right before the pandemic happened. It was initially supposed to launch in March and now, you know, but then a pandemic hit. So, the timeline needs to be resolved, you know so, how does that work? Can you talk a little bit through that? And, and how COVID-19 has impacted the timeline and how parishes can shift things around a bit?

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(Chelsy) Right, Kat! That's a great question, too, because our real launch date was the twenty fifth anniversary of *The Gospel of Life*, and a lot of places went into lockdown about a week before that. So, we lost some of that initial momentum, but that's okay. I'm going to pull up this overview of the schedule, also on the action guide, so you can see originally we were kicking off in March, and it was going to run through next March. Now, despite COVID-19, the really good news is this initiative was always designed to be adaptable. We knew from the beginning that we were going to need flexible schedules, because it's nationwide and every diocese is going to have different scheduling conflicts and challenges.

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Even parishes within a diocese are going to have different things going on in their parish that are going to make them need to adjust the schedule. So, as you read through that action guide, it'll probably sound like a broken record, how many times we say adapt, adapt, be flexible. This is not prescriptive. This is truly meant for you to take it and make it your own. We just wanted to do as much of the work for you as possible.

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So, with that, with COVID-19, we have heard that a lot of dioceses have been delayed. Some were able to kind of launch and get it off the ground, but then had to shut down. So, many dioceses are opting to just delay that launch or re-launch. Some dioceses we've heard from are going to try to just catch up to the schedule. A lot of the beginning steps and tasks can be done virtually. So that's also the good news. You can get started now. Other dioceses are just going to delay a little, or they started and they're maybe going to extend or just adjust a little bit. So, all those things are great... whatever is going to work for your parish, for your diocese.

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We want everyone to be safe and prudent, but that's why it's great that all these things were meant to be adapted from the beginning. So, it's not that all is lost, by any means. We're really trying to celebrate it as a year-long effort, anyway. So, even if you have to delay, we've given some alternative schedules for starting.

Some of those dates are October for Respect Life month. There's also an option for January, and some may even choose just to wait until next March and just follow the same timeline, just a year delayed and that's okay too. That's wonderful. And that gives you lots of planning time. And there are things you can do to get started, though, even now. So, no matter which option your diocese takes, or your parish, it really is designed to be flexible.

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(Kat) Thank you so much, Chelsy. So, just to review and sum up, *Walking with Moms in Need* is a parish-based, yet nationwide, initiative, which means again, we need lots of flexibility because every area is different and has different needs and different schedules. And it is a deliberate process, where no matter when you start, you go through a similar process, similar phases—all of which are laid out in the action guide. We are attempting, as a Catholic community, to facilitate parishes to walk with and accompany vulnerable pregnant and parenting moms. To do that, we're going to identify new parish leaders, try to bring in more blood, get the clergy and the laity to work together to make a positive impact.

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It is not necessarily about replacing what's already there or trying to take the place of a pregnancy center, but to find what is there locally, and then where the gaps are and where they can fill those gaps, so we can take care of our sisters, the women who are out there who need to see the face of Christ. We want to, as part of this, change the conversation about what it means to live the Gospel of life and to be a Catholic walking the walk instead of just talking to talk. Again, we're fundamentally about building relationships as we engage through this process so that the community can surround a woman in friendship and walk with her through her pregnancy and beyond. So, that's what *Walking with Moms in Need* is really all about.

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We are hoping you can get started right now, because the pandemic and its economic impact has only made the situation more precarious for women who are facing an unexpected or challenging pregnancy, or who are parenting young kids and might be in need. While *Walking with Moms in Need* was started way before the pandemic ever hit (we couldn't have predicted that), its goal is to lay a foundation for a long-term, sustainable response. This year of service is the beginning. It is laid out, but what you do with that, what your parish does with that, will be its own future, and we really hope that will be a sustainable thing so that women in your community will continue to be served by the love of the local Church.

[00:37:09]

And the Church, again needs to be prepared to respond to increased calls for help and assistance, given COVID-19. We know that everyone here watching today has unique gifts that they can bring to this, that they can do to live the Gospel of life in their community and to serve the most vulnerable among us.

[00:37:28]

So, with that, we will go to towards Q and A. A lot of you already have listed some great questions. Thank you so much for your enthusiasm for this. We'll try to get to as many of them as we can. And with that, I'll give you Anne.

[00:37:47]

(Anne) Thanks Kat!

Q (Anne): Two people asked a similar question: Is there a way that the USCCB could connect different organizations in the local area – hospitals, churches, Catholic organizations – who have shown an interest in *Walking with Moms in Need*? And would all the parishes be able to receive this information about these organizations?

A (Anne): That is the meat and potatoes of this process that we are inviting you into.

A (Tom): I would just add that every diocese was asked to fill out their own survey and their own listing of resources available at the regional level and the diocesan level to share with parishes. So, that's one of the important points of why to get in touch with your diocesan contact person for Respect Life ministry as soon as you can. <https://www.usccb.org/committees/pro-life-activities/diocesan-pro-life-offices>

[00:38:44]

Q (Anne): And Tom, how would they find out who their diocese contact person is?

A (Tom): Oh, I think we're going to be sharing the link to the listing of diocesan contact people in the chat, and probably in the follow-up in an email to all the attendees.

Q (Anne): So, not the person who's been appointed for *Walking with Moms in Need*, but the directors who actually work in the chanceries?

A (Tom): Yes, and most often they're the same.

A (Anne): So, go to that directory and start with that person. And then, most likely, he or she will be the person you want to talk to anyway, or they can help you figure out who you should talk to.

[00:39:25]

Q (Anne): Is there a USCCB Spanish-speaking coordinator for *Walking with Moms in Need*?

A: While we do not have a staff level Spanish-speaker for *Walking with Moms in Need*, the reality is that, actually, we don't even have an English-speaking coordinator for *Walking with Moms in Need*. This is a very much a group effort of our office and of collaborating offices and organizations across the country. However, that being said, all of the resources that we're producing are available in Spanish. These can be found at caminaconmadres.com.

[00:40:09]

Q (Anne): How does this relate to the Respect Life plan for 2020-2021? Is this part of it, or does it take the place of it?

A: The short answer is neither. A lot of the resources are going to pair very well. For example, we're going to be producing sort of a “CliffsNotes” version of *Evangelium vitae* and an accompanying study guide that would be perfect for the educational side of *Walking with Moms in Need*. So, they're designed to be separate, but very complimentary.

[00:40:47]

Q (Anne): Where do we get the action guide? And how much does it cost? And how can we get a hard copy of the parish action guide?

A (*Chelsy*): The good news is it's absolutely free. You just go to www.walkingwithmoms.com, select "Get Started," and then select "[Parish Resources](#)." We are not printing this. Unfortunately, it's cost prohibitive. But you can download it for free and print it at any local print shop, on your home computer, Kinko's, or whatever is convenient for you.

A (*Kat*): And that goes for all our resources. Everything we're doing for this is a hundred percent free. There's no charge for absolutely any of it. And it's all available on our website to download, print—it's yours.

A (*Anne*): And I'm sorry, if you already mentioned this during your presentation, but that is actually a great selling point for pastors who maybe are hesitant to take on something new right now. *Walking with Moms in Need* is either a no-cost or very low-cost endeavor for a parish. And so that might be helpful to highlight.

A (*Kat*): Right. Especially that all the materials, too, are from the USCCB, which, hopefully is a trusted source. And, coming from the bishops' conference and it being 100% free, it should be hopefully seen as maybe more legitimate to pastors.

[00:42:08]

Q (*Anne*): When we say "gaps," what would be some examples of "gaps"?

A (*Kat*): What a great question. Again – we keep saying it's a process, and I don't want to belabor it, but what you'll notice when you begin doing the inventory of what's available in your community for women in need, you might notice that there are things that aren't there.

Like maybe the only local clinic isn't Catholic, and it promotes things that are a little worrisome. And it might be, maybe in your community, your parish, there are a lot of doctors there who might be able to be available to help women with certain prenatal consultations or something like that. That's an example of a gap.

Maybe there already is a great pregnancy care center, but it's far away. Are there people in the parish who could drive women to the pregnancy care center? Or maybe, if one's *really* far away, could that be something that the parish looks at getting started—some kind of local Catholic pregnancy care center? So, the options are endless.

What we know is that women are looking for resources. They're also looking for friends. They're looking for people to talk to. They're looking for people to take them to a doctor's appointment. An interesting fact is that three quarters of women who are seeking an abortion are below the poverty line, and eighty-nine percent are unmarried. So, there's a tremendous amount of deprivation that a lot of these women are enduring.

And I think you're going to notice that when you're looking at who's really vulnerable in your community, who has a low-income, and in need in other ways, you're going to see that there are things that maybe aren't there. Or if they are there, the addition of a helping hand of someone to really walk with them, a friend, a person to give them that relational support is crucial. So, those are some examples of potential gaps.

A (*Chelsy*): And I just want to add to what Kat said—that this is gone through in a very detailed way in the action guide. Right now, we're giving you a fifty-thousand-foot view of just the overview, the basics. A lot of the questions we're not going to get to are answered when you actually go through and read the seventy-eight pages. So, we've tried to hit everything. There's steps on "How do I identify those gaps?," how the inventory process is going to reveal those, how to address them, and ideas of how to fill them. It is all in that action guide.

[00:44:29]

Q (Anne): What would we say to people who are wondering whether they can team up with other local parishes near them?

A (Tom): I think it's a wonderful idea, and it's a great way to link resources. As someone mentioned, for instance, if you find that there's no pregnancy center within a hundred miles, that might be something that a group of parishes might do. Or, if you find that there's a tremendous need for housing in your area, maybe a group of parishes can get together and look at starting a small, residential maternity home. There are many things you can do as groups. So, yes, that's *greatly* to be encouraged at the local level, regional level.

A (Chelsy): And I'll just add to what Tom said. We do really encourage that, especially when it comes to responses, especially for some larger projects that are going to take more than one parish. We do really encourage every parish to have their specific core team and to complete the inventory for themselves just because that's the best way that your parish is going to get to know the landscape and understand the community. And we realize some of you are very close and have similarities. So, definitely team up and help each other, but we do just really encourage you to really dive in as a parish, as well, and to form that parish committee to really take on some of those things.

A (Kat): Right. And again, as Chelsy said, we want everyone at the parish, everyone in the pews, to know where to refer a pregnant or parenting mom in need. The more we can do something locally as a parish, but then also, maybe for the responses, work together—that's fantastic. But we also do need that individual parish involvement to build that community locally to get everyone in the pews knowing where to refer a woman in need and how to walk with her.

A (Chelsy): And some parishes have great relationships already, so if that's a natural outflow, definitely help each other out, team up, that's great. But just make sure you're still getting *your* parish involved, too.

[00:46:38]

Q (Anne): If parish groups are not able to meet right now, or are only able to have video meetings, how can they move forward with this—especially if they're not well-versed in that type of technology?

A (Kat): So, this is a great question. One of the things we love about *Walking with Moms in Need* is that we're trying to build new partnerships, and that even happens with who is taking the reins on aspects of *Walking with Moms in Need* itself. Admittedly, *Walking with Moms in Need* has a lot of digital resources. We have websites and webinars and downloads.

And the reality is that a lot of the moms in need who you're serving are youth who text for everything in their everyday life. The fact is that most moms out there who are pregnant or parenting, or who are vulnerable, are probably in their twenties and more comfortable with texting than they are even with a traditional phone call. So, what *Walking with Moms in Need* invites is the participation of more people of different generations.

So, we absolutely welcome you, even if you're not super comfortable with tech, to participate with *Walking with Moms in Need*, talk to your pastor about it, serve on that core team. But then talk with your pastor and see how you can get people involved who are younger, different generations, are comfortable with technology, and can help flesh out different aspects of this program, too. Because we cannot replace the experience and commitment of our veteran, committed volunteers who might not be as comfortable with technology but bring a wealth of experience to this type of ministry.

That said, there are needs today that involve working with technology. So, we hope that a project like *Walking with Moms in Need* can bring different generations together, including the younger parishioners at a church, the youth group and the rest because that's a really important aspect of it. And I think there was something in that question I didn't address—I don't know?

[00:48:37]

Q(Anne): Well, how can you move forward if they can't meet together in person?

A (Chelsy): This is going to require a little bit of technology, and so who can you reach out to? Is it someone else in parish that you can team up with? Is it a friend, a colleague that you could say, “Hey, I want to do this, and I need some help with the computer.”

But a lot of the beginning stuff is really, honestly, getting your pastor on board and getting him to appoint a parish leader—which could be you, it could be someone else. Encourage him to really discern that, and we have steps for that in the guide. But once they have that, then you can start building that core team. You can start emailing or use the phone. People are dying for some communication these days. Reach out to people who you think would be great on the core team, invite them.

You can even meet as the core team. You can do it via a video chat if you have that capability. If you're in an area that would maybe allow for you to get together outside, socially-distanced appropriately, start meeting and planning.

You can also begin stuff with the inventory. It's a lot of phone calls to organizations, online research—that's all stuff that you can do right from home today, starting now.

[00:50:03]

(Anne) Alright, I think that wraps us up. If anybody else has other questions, feel free to send them to us. We will be looking at the most frequently asked and hopefully developing kind of an FAQ. So, your questions—if you're thinking them, somebody else probably is, also. So, your questions will help us do our best to continue answering those into the future. With that, I'll pass it back to Kat.

[00:50:27]

(Kat) Alright, thank you, again. And, just to sum up what we've talked about:

1. First step: look at the action guide and connect with your pastor and diocesan Respect Life coordinator if you're interested in getting *Walking with Moms in Need* started.
2. For those of you who have already been appointed as a parish leader, dive a little deeper into Phase 1 and see what you can start doing from home.
3. Most importantly, continue to **pray** for mothers in need and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to continue to lead this initiative, because that's the most important thing, right? We want to do the will of God and to be the face of Christ to others.

I am so grateful for all of you, for your interest in being Christ's hands and feet. I pray for you and for all of your efforts, and we will continue to be here to serve you and help you as you try to get this all started. God bless all of you.