

9 Days for Life: Masterpieces of God's Creation

By Anne McGuire

“When God created each of us, He did so with precision and purpose, and He looks on each of us with love that cannot be outdone in intensity or tenderness.”

—2014-15 Respect Life Program flyer

Last autumn, the bishops of the United States marked October as Respect Life Month, kicking off the yearlong 2014-15 Respect Life Program with the theme, “Each of us is a masterpiece of God’s creation.” The flyer quoted above explores the idea that each of us is a treasured work of art made by God’s hands and that in light of this great love we are all called to treat ourselves and each other with reverence and respect.

As the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* approaches on January 22, we recall the more than 55 million children whose lives have been ended by abortion since that tragic decision. Like us, each of these children was created by the loving hand of God. The occasion of this anniversary is sobering, and we rightly remember and honor these children’s lives. We are given the opportunity in this moment in our various ministries to witness to the dignity of each person. We are given the opportunity to help those whom we serve understand the connection between God’s life-giving love for all people and our own respect for his gift of life.

MASTERPIECES OF GOD’S CREATION

As Pope Francis said in his 2013 Day for Life greeting, “Even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God’s creation, made in his own image, destined to

live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect.” His words remind us that our worth, value, and dignity are found in the love of God. No circumstances, no illness, nothing can minimize the value of anyone’s life. God holds each of us in existence out of love and gives each of us the gift of each breath. Indeed, Pope Benedict XVI, in his inaugural homily, reminded us, “Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary.”

OBSERVANCE AND ACTIVITIES



January 22 is designated in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM, no. 373) as a particular day of prayer and penance for abortion, the “Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children.”

(For more information, please visit www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/resources/january-22-day-of-prayer.cfm.)

Additionally, the USCCB is sponsoring for the third consecutive year the popular “9 Days for Life”

Pro-Life PERSPECTIVE

initiative, a nine-day period of prayer, penance, and pilgrimage surrounding the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. During the 9 days from Saturday, January 17–Sunday, January 25, a simple novena will be made available with daily prayer intentions for the healing and conversion of our nation and people impacted by the culture of death. Individuals who sign up to participate in the nationwide novena may receive each day’s prayer intention and related content via text message, email, printable handout, or mobile app (available for both Android and iOS users).

During this 9-day period, leaders are encouraged to incorporate 9 Days for Life either into their regular programming or with separate events. A number of planning and promotional resources, which can be found at www.9daysforlife.com, have been developed to assist leaders in their efforts.

Planning resources include a template for a Holy Hour for Reparation and Healing, the Order for the

Blessing of Pro-Life Pilgrims, pro-life Rosary prayer intentions, and more. Resources for promotion and distribution include a one-page promotional flyer, printable handouts for each day’s content, a social media kit with shareable images and pre-written posts, ads for web and print, and multiple variations of the 9Days logo.

USCCB RESOURCES

Aside from the resources already mentioned, the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities also offers a number of resources that could be helpful in bringing awareness both to the joyful truth that we are each a masterpiece of God’s creation and also to the ways in which this truth relates to many different life issues. Please visit www.usccb.org/respectlife and www.usccb.org/prolife for resources in both English and Spanish.

Anne McGuire is Assistant Director for Education and Outreach for the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.