



# DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

*Office of the Bishop*

October 5, 2025

Dear Friends in Christ,

Fear, sadness, uncertainty – these are just a few of the many emotions that a woman with an unplanned pregnancy or someone recently diagnosed with a terminal illness may feel. In these moments, we as the Body of Christ are called to be beacons of hope to these individuals. Through our conversations, advocacy efforts, and acts of service, we bear witness to God's love and inspire hope for those whose hearts are burdened.

As we celebrate Respect Life Month, I want to share some of the ways the Church brings hope to those facing life's most difficult challenges:

- Catholic Charities West Michigan served more than 7,600 families last year through its St. Gianna's No Cost Baby Boutiques.
- More than 40 Catholic parishes across the diocese provide diapers, wipes, and other essential supplies through the Walking with Moms in Need initiative.
- The Church's Project Rachel Ministry offers support and Rachel's Vineyard Retreats to help women and men find healing after abortion.
- The Michigan Catholic Conference advocates for laws that protect the dignity of human life from conception to natural death and assists in organizing the State March for Life.

Christian hope is never meant just for us; it is a light we must share with others. I encourage you to volunteer at a St. Gianna's boutique or in your local parish, bring a meal or offer support to someone facing health challenges, or join me at the State March for Life on November 6 in Lansing. Through these acts, we proclaim the goodness, value, and dignity of every person, especially those whose lives society too often disregards.

During this Respect Life Month, let us reflect more deeply on the sacredness of every human life. Please visit the diocesan website ([grdiocese.org](http://grdiocese.org)) for resources to guide your prayer, study and action. May Christ transform our hearts to protect and cherish all who are most vulnerable. Saint Maximilian Kolbe, pray for us!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak  
Bishop of Grand Rapids