



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE of ORANGE

PASTORAL CENTER: OFFICE OF LIFE, JUSTICE AND PEACE
13280 CHAPMAN AVENUE, GARDEN GROVE, CA 92840

Guidelines for Catholic Pro-Life Outreach

The Diocese offers Catholics these guidelines for appropriate witness to the Catholic Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person and the inviolable right to life of all human beings. Faithful Catholics are encouraged to prayerfully reflect on these guidelines when preparing to engage in pro-life public outreach, which includes education, pastoral care, prayer, and advocacy.

Appropriate witness to the life and dignity of the human person is characterized as...

- * **Humble and prayerful**, flowing from God's grace, forgiveness, and love in our own lives, and confident in the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.
- * **Merciful**, remembering God's merciful love which seeks to draw all people to Himself through repentance and conversion. Our mercy must extend especially to those who encourage or commit crimes against life.
- * **Respectful**, upholding the law of our land and respecting the property and choices of others, especially choices made under duress. While seeking to protect the lives of the unborn, the vulnerable, and the elderly, we must remember that the hearts, minds, and consciences of those making a choice against life will only be changed through prayerful intercession for God's mercy and healing, NOT through our condemnation or judgment.
- * **Dialogical**, marked by a patient adherence to the truth and ongoing discussion with those with differing views. Dialogue should reflect an *informed* understanding and passionate interest in the issues without condescension or belittlement.
- * **Nonviolent**, never in an angry or threatening manner and carried out in imitation of our Lord who taught us to turn the other cheek to those who ridicule or otherwise taunt Catholics exercising their right to free speech.
- * **Holistic**, seeking to address the material and spiritual poverty and other root causes of abortion, euthanasia, or other choices against life. Holistic outreach includes offering aid and comfort to those in crisis, providing opportunities for healing and forgiveness, and lovingly providing for the needs of both care-givers and care-receivers facing the difficulties associated with crises at any stage of life.
- * **Pastorally sensitive**, conveying the strength of love rather than using offensive or explicit signs, slogans and/or photographs of victims in order to best witness to Christ's uplifting promise of hope.
- * **Joyful**, anticipating the coming Kingdom of God, trusting in God's promise that the light will overcome the darkness, rejoicing in "the gospel [that] fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus." (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 1)