

## SPIRITUAL ADOPTION PROGRAM

**Purpose:** The purpose of this program is threefold:

- ❖ To have the entire parish community pray for babies in danger of abortion.
- ❖ To educate people about the development of the unborn child.
- ❖ To influence the hearts and minds of parishioners to value life.

### **Procedures:**

1. Decide what month the program will begin and end.
  - ❖ Begin in December at the Immaculate Conception and end in September at the feast of the Birth of Mary.
  - ❖ Begin in January on Roe v Wade day and end in October at Respect Life Month.
  - ❖ Begin in September and end in May for Mothers' Day.
  - ❖ Begin in October during Respect Life Month and end in June.
2. **Two weeks before the program is to begin** place an initial announcement in the parish bulletin inviting parishioners to participate. (Sample announcement follows.)
3. **One week before the program is to begin** include information regarding this program in the verbal announcements made by the celebrant or lector. Announce that the program will begin next week and further details are available in the bulletin. Have the written announcement from the previous week's bulletin printed in this week's bulletin as well.
4. **The week the program begins**
  - ❖ Speaker will present short explanation at the end of each Mass.
  - ❖ Pledges will be taken after every Mass. At tables outside Church, parishioners will be given an envelope with the Spiritual Adoption Program flyer, a paper baby buggy (with a magnet attached), a paper bib and an Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Unborn prayer card. (See samples). To order on-line, click on <http://www.spiritualadoption.org> (Also available in Spanish.) "Watch me Grow" brochures also available.
  - ❖ Parishioners write the name of their adopted baby on a baby bib and put in baskets placed on the tables. The bibs will be added to a Tree of Life Banner or Poster. Hopefully this banner or poster can be displayed somewhere in the Church or Church grounds.
5. **Fetal development posters** will be displayed each month along with the Tree of Life Banner. These posters are in English and Spanish. They are available through the Diocese of Baltimore. Go to <http://www.archbalt.org/respect-life/posters/> to order online.
6. **Two weeks after the program begins** place a thank you note in the bulletin for those who are participating and to let the parish know how many individuals and families are participating.
7. **Every month**, place an announcement in the parish bulletin with a reminder for parishioners to continue praying for their spiritually adopted preborn child along with information on the development of the child. (Monthly bulletin inserts follow)
8. **At the conclusion of the program** hold a parish celebration. A baby shower and social hour after Mass can be held for those who have been participating for the past nine months. The collection of baby gifts can be donated to Casa Theresa or Precious Life Shelter or any Respect Life Center, Clinic or Shelter.

## **SPIRITUAL ADOPTION PROGRAM**

### **Bulletin Announcement**

**Two weeks before the program is to begin.**

Everyone loves the beauty and innocence of a baby. As an expression of that love, (insert the name of the parish) announces an adoption program for young and old alike.

The members of (insert name of parish) parish family will have the opportunity next weekend to “spiritually” adopt a child who is newly conceived this month. Not all newly conceived babies are allowed to be born. In fact, more than 4,000 babies lose their lives to abortion each day. It is these babies you are being asked to “adopt”.

You may “adopt” a child individually or as a family by signing up during the weekend of (give date). You will be asked to name the child for whom you will be praying, thereby giving the baby the humanity he or she deserves. You will be asked to pray for your unborn child and for all unborn children, for the power of prayer is great.

You will receive monthly reports through the parish bulletin describing your baby’s development and your child will be born in (give month).

There are millions of unborn babies desperately in need of your prayers. Won’t you please “spiritually adopt” one and share the love for life that God have given you.

# **SPIRITUAL ADOPTION PROGRAM**

## **Monthly Bulletin Announcements**

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### **MONTH ONE – Developing Baby**



Your spiritually adopted baby has been quite active over the past month. Already your baby is 10,000 times bigger than at conception. Your baby has developed the foundations of his/her brain, spinal cord, and nervous system by the 20<sup>th</sup> day. His/her heart began to beat on the 21<sup>st</sup> day. His/her heart is pumping blood through its own circulatory system and the blood type can be different from his/her mother's. Your baby is most vulnerable during the next month of being aborted. Pray that the Lord of Life might move the heart of his/her mother to give him/her the most precious gift of all - - the gift of life.

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### **MONTH TWO – Developing Baby**



Your baby is making progress developing all of his/her external features and internal organs. His/her brain is functioning at 40 days. His/her mother can hear his/her heartbeat now on an ultrasonic stethoscope. Milk-teeth buds are present at 6 ½ weeks. And it has been reported that a two-month old baby can suck his/her thumb. From this moment, your spiritually adopted baby grows and refines his/her body. But everything he/she needs to survive once he/she is born is already present by the end of the eighth week.

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### **MONTH THREE – Developing Baby**



Your baby is quite active in the womb now - - although his/her mother won't feel him/her for another couple of months. If his/her mother's womb had a window, you could watch your spiritually adopted baby squint, swallow and move his/her tongue. He/she can make a tight fist if you touch his/her pal He/she is breathing fluid which he continues until birth. He/she obtains the oxygen his/her body needs through the umbilical cord. The baby you are praying for weighs one ounce.

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### **MONTH FOUR -- Developing Baby**



Well, your little baby now weighs six ounces. He/she has fingernails and eyelashes. He/she has his/her own unique fingerprints, which will remain the same until he/she dies. His/her tastebuds are working. His/her sense of hearing is developing and present at 14 weeks. There are no major developments anymore. Your spiritually adopted baby is already well-formed, internally and externally. All he/she needs now is time to gain weight and grow strong. What a miracle he/she is!

### **Spiritual Adoption Program**

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### **MONTH FIVE – Developing Baby**



Your spiritually adopted baby weighs over one pound now. His mother can feel his movement now. Before he was too small for her to feel. Although he swam with ease in his watery world, he needed to be big and strong enough to kick hard against the outside wall and dent it -- the inside wall of the uterus has no feeling. We are mid-way through the pregnancy now. Your prayers have helped your baby's mother continue with her pregnancy and seek the help she needs.

### **Spiritual Adoption Program**

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### **MONTH SIX – Developing Baby**



Your spiritually adopted baby is developing quite beautifully now. His/her weight is approaching 2 pounds. Babies born prematurely at this time have a very good chance of surviving. The medical advances in caring for extremely small newborn infants are extraordinary indeed. Justice O'Connor has remarked that the *Roe vs. Wade* decision is on a collision course with itself. Each passing year, we witness medical advances that allow medical professionals to save younger and younger premature infants.

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### **MONTHS SEVEN AND EIGHT – Developing Baby**



You are in the home stretch with your spiritually adopted baby. He/she is completely formed, and has been since 8 weeks. All he/she is doing now is gaining weight -- and making his/her mother uncomfortable with his/her size. But she is not worried. In a short time, her baby will be born. Your baby's mother appreciated the prayers you have said for her and her baby throughout the pregnancy. It has not been easy, but your prayers have given her the grace she needed to bring her baby to term.

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### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY – SPIRITUALLY ADOPTED BABY**



Your spiritually adopted baby was born this month -- nine months after his/her mother conceived him/her. The only change at birth is a change in the external life support system of the baby. He/she is no different now than he/she before birth except that he breathes and eats differently. He/she truly a miracle. He began as a 46-chromosome cell and has developed over the past nine months into this unique human baby. Never before in history, nor ever again, will anyone exist who is just like your spiritually adopted baby. Your prayers saved his/her life. Thank you on behalf of all of the little babies that you cared enough to pray for him/her and his/her mother.