

RESPECT LIFE



Art: "The Ascension" by Azzolino. Courtesy of Restored Traditions. Used with permission.

Since 1972 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has designated the month of October as Respect Life Month. This year's theme is "Be Not Afraid."

October is also a month in which we honor Mary in a special way. October 7th is the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary and, this year, October 13th is the 100th anniversary of the sixth apparition of Mary to the three shepherd children at Fatima in which she identified herself as, "The Lady of the Rosary" and performed the miracle of the sun.

When we consider all the threats to human life in our times, we can find strength and encouragement by reflecting on the words, "Be Not Afraid." At the Annunciation the Angel Gabriel said to Mary, "Do not be afraid...for nothing will be impossible for God" (Lk 1:30, 37). One of the first things that Our Lady said to the three shepherd children was, "don't be afraid." In his first homily as Pope and many times during his pontificate, Saint John Paul II encouraged us to "not be afraid." In the great encyclical *Evangelium vitae* (The Gospel of Life), Saint John Paul II urges us to look to Our Lady "who is for us a sign of sure hope and solace" (EV 105).

The NACN-U.S.A. encourages all nurses to commemorate Respect Life Month in whatever way Our Lord directs you, to "Be Not Afraid," and to offer this prayer, as found in The Gospel of Life (EV105):

O Mary,  
bright dawn of the new world,  
Mother of the living,  
to you do we entrust the cause of life  
Look down, O Mother,  
upon the vast numbers  
of babies not allowed to be born,  
of the poor whose lives are made difficult,  
of men and women  
who are victims of brutal violence,  
of the elderly and the sick killed  
by indifference or out of misguided mercy.

Grant that all who believe in your Son  
may proclaim the Gospel of life

with honesty and love  
to the people of our time.

Obtain for them the grace  
to accept that Gospel  
as a gift ever new,  
the joy of celebrating it with gratitude  
throughout their lives  
and the courage to bear witness to it  
resolutely, in order to build,  
together with all people of good will,  
the civilization of truth and love,  
to the praise and glory of God,  
the Creator and lover of life.

---

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Respect Life Program (2017). <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/> accessed October 1, 2017.

John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae* (25, March 1995). Retrieved from [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_25031995\\_evangelium-vitae.html#%243Y](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html#%243Y)