



THE DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
**Office of Human Life,
Family and Bioethics**



December 2022

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Dear Friends for Life,

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord”

Luke 2:11

During Advent we yearned for the coming of the Christ Child, and lo, our Savior has come! Taking on our human flesh, the Son of God was born in a humble manger in the cold, dark night, a Sign of Contradiction: small, but great; helpless, but omnipotent; rejected, but exalted. It is the Mystery of a God Who loves us so much that He became Man to accomplish our undeserved Redemption. *Gloria in Excelsis Deo!*

THE HOLY FAMILY MODEL

It is impossible to contemplate the Christmas Miracle and not consider the example of the Holy Family and what they tell us today about the Christian family and marriage. The family unit is so important that God chose this humble pathway for the Incarnation. In particular, the Holy Family reveals the keys to holiness: keep Jesus at the center of our lives (Mary and Joseph were the first to adore the Real Presence!), be obedient to God’s will (Mary’s “fiat,” Jesus’ obedience to his parents, etc.), observe the Faith, and share the burdens of other family members with joy.¹

The family is the most basic unit of society and it is the community in which one first learns about God, moral values, love and responsibility for others.² In that the Christian family is a communion

¹ [The Holy Family at Christmas: Model of Faith and Love | John Paul II Renewal Center \(jp2renew.org\)](#)

² Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 2207-8

of persons together creating, sacrificing, praying and evangelizing, it reflects the Holy Trinity, in the works of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.³ Indeed, the Christian family is rightly called the “domestic church” for it is a community of faith, hope and charity.⁴

The contract of marriage is what brings the family unit into existence and maintains it, i.e. fulfilling the primary ends of marriage which are the begetting and raising of children. Therefore, to achieve this with the greatest likelihood for success, it only makes sense that the state of marriage is traditionally defined as the permanent and exclusive union between a man and a woman, sealed by a contract.⁵

A MIS-NAMED LAW

Unfortunately, this month during Advent, President Biden signed into law the so-called Respect for Marriage Act which effectively repealed the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (which defined marriage as the union of “husband and wife”) and enshrined same-sex so-called marriage in federal law. While the new statute acknowledges that “[n]o union is more profound than marriage,” it has *redefined* marriage as being simply “between two individuals,” thereby dissociating marriage from its natural and logical foundations (childbearing and raising), rejecting its sacred nature, disregarding long-standing beliefs of the Church (and society in general), and potentially setting up a way to punish people of faith who dissent from this progressive view.⁶

Although the Catholic Church recognizes the inherent dignity and intrinsic value of every human being regardless of sexual attraction, it cannot call “marriage” what is not. The Respect for Marriage Act cannot change the truth of marriage. But because the law does not include clear conscience protections for religious organizations, faith-based businesses and individuals with traditional views on marriage, it will make participation in the public square more difficult for such groups. And sadly, this redefinition of marriage will contribute to the continued erosion of the moral values of our culture and the strength of our families—the foundation of our society.⁷ Never before is the example of the Holy Family more needed!

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Let us pray especially for families at this critical time in history. They are the “sanctuary of life.”⁸ For more information on authentic Church teaching regarding Same-Sex Attraction and Gender Identity Discordance, you can find educational and support resources on our website [here](#).

Please see diocesan media outlets for this year’s final reflection on the Holy Innocents.

³ CCC, 2205

⁴ CCC, 2204

⁵ Austin Fagothey, S.J., *Right and Reason: Ethics in Theory and Practice Based on the Teachings of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas* (St. Louis: Tan Books & Pub, 2000), 358-9.

⁶ [‘Respect for Marriage Act’ Could Have Dire Consequences for Defenders of Traditional Marriage | National Catholic Register \(ncregister.com\)](#)
[The “Respect for Marriage Act” and the new federal regulation of marriage – Catholic World Report](#)
[House sends Respect for Marriage Act to Biden for signature - Catholic Courier](#)

⁷ [‘Respect for Marriage Act’ Could Have Dire Consequences for Defenders of Traditional Marriage | National Catholic Register \(ncregister.com\)](#)
[The “Respect for Marriage Act” and the new federal regulation of marriage – Catholic World Report](#)
[House sends Respect for Marriage Act to Biden for signature - Catholic Courier](#)

⁸ [Evangelium Vitae \(25 March 1995\) | John Paul II \(vatican.va\)](#)

For the first time since 2020, the Diocese of Rockville Centre will participate in the March for Life activities in Washington, D.C. on January 20, 2022. However, parishes and other groups will continue to host local activities as well. Please visit our diocesan March for Life website www.drvcmarchforlife.com for the latest March for Life information at the local and national levels.

Please consider joining us for our weekly Rosary for Life, Fridays at 3:00 p.m. (See [flyer](#) for link or go to our website, www.DRVClife.org.)

PRAY ALWAYS

Let us continue to pray for each other and most especially for families, at this critical time in history—that our families might be more like the Holy Family, our model and source of strength, leading us always to Jesus and our heavenly destiny!

The Holy Family Prayer⁹

JESUS, Son of God and Son of Mary, bless our family. Graciously inspire in us the unity, peace, and mutual love that you found in your own family in the little town of Nazareth.

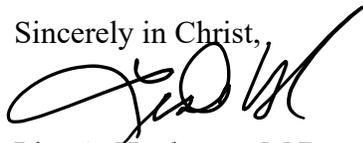
MARY, Mother of Jesus and Our Mother, nourish our family with your faith and your love. Keep us close to your Son, Jesus, in all our sorrows and joys.

JOSEPH, Foster-father to Jesus, guardian and spouse of Mary, keep our family safe from harm. Help us in all times of discouragement or anxiety.

HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH, make our family one with you. Help us to be instruments of peace. Grant that love, strengthened by grace, may prove mightier than all the weaknesses and trials through which our families sometimes pass. May we always have God at the center of our hearts and homes until we are all one family, happy and at peace in our true home with you. Amen.

Finally, please know that we, in the Office of Human Life, Family and Bioethics, wish you and your families a very blessed, Merry Christmas and a very Happy and Holy New Year. Let us enter 2023 with courage, conviction and unceasing prayer!

Sincerely in Christ,



Lisa A. Honkanen, M.D.

⁹ [The Holy Family Prayer - Missionaries of the Holy Family \(msf-america.org\)](http://www.msf-america.org)