

women in poverty, and the sources for help may not be apparent to those most needing support. Women facing challenging pregnancies should see the Church as a place where they can find help, especially with its extensive social services dedicated to meeting the needs of people in crisis.

Through *Walking with Moms in Need* the Church is being asked to respond to Pope John Paul II's call and honestly assess the pastoral and practical assistance that it currently provides to pregnant moms and families in need and how effective it is in communicating such help.

Pope John Paul II wrote that, "gratitude and joy at the incomparable dignity of the human person impel us to share [the Gospel of Life] with everyone."⁶ He said we need to bring this message "to the hearts of all people and make it penetrate every part of society."⁷ By reaching out to lovingly support and care for pregnant women and their children, we witness to the sanctity of every human person, in every stage and every circumstance.

Evangelium vitae emphasizes that, "where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly consistent. It cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable... We need then to 'show care' for all life and for the life of everyone."⁸ Pope John Paul II highlights the incredible history of service and charity that the Church has provided throughout the centuries to those abandoned and forgotten by society. He urges that "every Christian community, with a renewed sense of responsibility, must



continue to write this history."⁹

We are called to reverence and love every human person as ourselves. It is our responsibility to care for and protect human life, especially the lives of the most vulnerable among us. *Evangelium vitae* teaches us that "the task of accepting and serving life involves everyone; and this task must be fulfilled above all towards life when it is at its weakest."¹⁰

Pope John Paul II wrote, "the Gospel of God's love for man, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of life are a single and indivisible Gospel."¹¹ The Gospel of Jesus is the Gospel of Life, and to love Jesus is to love and serve life. As followers of Christ, may we strive to continually respond to the needs of the poor and vulnerable entrusted to us by God.

As part of Walking with Moms in Need, the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities is providing educational, pastoral, and action-oriented resources to help parishes go to the peripheries and bring hope and help to mothers in need. Through the combined efforts of parishes nationwide, we hope to move closer to the day when every pregnant mother in need knows where to turn for help, and abortion is unthinkable. Visit WalkingWithMoms.com to learn more and to pledge to prayerfully walk with mothers in need.

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1 Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), 81.
2 Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 86.
3 Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 58.

4 Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 80.
5 Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 95.
6 Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 80.
7 *Ibid.*

8 Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 87.
9 *Ibid.*
10 Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 43.
11 Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 2.