



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

January 12, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Once more, we have had to forgo our diocesan pilgrimage to the national March for Life due to considerations around COVID-19. Far from inhibiting our witness, the cancellation speaks of our deep convictions about the dignity of the human person and of our Christian care for one another. The cancellation is unfortunate, considering the spiritual and evangelical nature of the pilgrimage. But we must also view it another way: as an opportunity to direct time and resources toward building up a culture of life in the Diocese of Manchester.

Here I wish to call your attention to an initiative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Walking with Moms in Need*. This initiative encourages us to find ways to support mothers with their children and families by remaining aware of local resources and by building bridges between them when necessary. Doing so, we create circumstances such that choosing life is surrounded more by joy and hope than fear and uncertainty.

Not long ago on the Second Sunday of Advent, we heard of Mary's visit with her cousin, Elizabeth (Lk 1:39-45). We know her travel was difficult, and yet we seem to remember it with fondness. Why do we think happily on this time as opposed to the one just prior to the birth of Jesus, which is more often characterized by feelings of unrest? As Mary was about to give birth, she and Joseph could not find a suitable place, and when they did find a place some traditional depictions suggest that only animals were there to greet them. On the other hand, while journeying to Elizabeth and Zechariah's house, *Mary knew where she was going. She knew a warm welcome awaited her.*

The national March for Life approaches and we prayerfully unite with those marching in Washington, D.C. (January 21, 2021). We will also observe the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children (January 22, 2022). As we do, let us ask ourselves, how might we help a mother in a difficult situation to better know where she is going? How might we facilitate a warm welcome for her and her child?

Walking with Moms in Need provides a framework to help us as we seek to answer these important questions. A page of related resources has been assembled on our diocesan website at www.CatholicNH.org/PilgrimsForLife. It includes more on this important initiative, a list of

Pregnancy Care Centers in New Hampshire and their current needs, and upcoming prayer opportunities in various parishes of the Diocese.

Due to a confluence of circumstances, procured abortion and the laws around it are a point of national conversation. May we embrace this unique time mindful of Christ's words, "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Invoking the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Protectress of the Unborn, I remain,

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Peter Libasci". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci
Bishop of Manchester