



The Roman Catholic  
*Diocese of Phoenix*

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

January 22, 2014

Dear Pastor and Respect Life Parish Coordinator,

You have undoubtedly heard much discussion about means for reducing the number of abortions in our country. As we continue to oppose abortions, we ~~must~~ also reach out to women in unexpected and challenging pregnancies with real, ~~concrete~~ help. The Gabriel Project is a practical, effective way for our parishes in the Diocese of Phoenix to do just that. As Pope Francis recently wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*, section 214:

"Precisely because this involves the internal consistency of our message about the value of the human person, the Church cannot be expected to change her position on this question (of abortion). ... This is not something subject to alleged reforms or "modernizations". It is not "progressive" to try to resolve problems by eliminating a human life. On the other hand, it is also true that we have done little to adequately accompany women in very difficult situations, where abortion appears as a quick solution to their profound anguish, especially when the life developing within them is the result of rape or a situation of extreme poverty.

Who can remain unmoved before such painful situations?"

I wish to convey to you my support of this parish-based ministry, which enables and trains parish volunteers to be mentors to our sisters who are afraid or alone in their pregnancies. ~~These "Gabriel Angels" mentor and support expectant mothers at a critical time in their lives~~ by providing the spiritual, material and emotional support needed during her pregnancy and beyond. This type of personal care can make all the difference in a woman's decision to choose life for her baby.

Mr. M. J. (Mike) Ronco of the Gabriel project of California has committed to expand the work of the Gabriel project to the Phoenix area where he lives part time. You may contact him at DadRonco@aol.com.

I encourage you to consider the Gabriel Project as a concrete way of helping a culture of life to grow in your parish area, reaching out to pregnant women in need.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Thomas J. Olmsted  
Bishop of Phoenix