

**REMARKS AT THE YOUTH RALLY AND MASS FOR LIFE
VERIZON CENTER, FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2017**

My Dear Young People:

As the Apostolic Nuncio, the Holy Father's personal representative in this country, I am very happy to be here with you today at the Verizon Center, a day on which we giving thanks to God for the Gift of Human Life and a day to participate in the Annual March for Life, showing our solidarity with the unborn in this throwaway culture.

Pope Francis has said: *"The victims of this culture are precisely the weakest and most fragile human beings -the unborn, the poorest, the sick and elderly, the seriously handicapped, etc – who are in danger of being 'thrown away,' expelled from a system that must be efficient at all costs."* (SPEECH TO DELEGATION FROM THE *DIGNITATIS HUMANA*E INSTITUTE, 7 DECEMBER 2013)

Your prophetic witness will not go unnoticed by God and does not go unnoticed by the Holy Father. What does the Holy Father ask of you? To be revolutionaries – to rebel against this throwaway culture in favor of life and love! He said in his message for last year's World Youth Day in Krakow:

"I urge you to rediscover the beauty of the human vocation to love, I also encourage you to rebel against the widespread tendency to reduce love to something banal ...deprived if its essential characteristics of beauty, communion, fidelity and responsibility. ... Dear young friends, in a culture of moral relativism and the ephemeral, many preach the importance of 'enjoying' the moment. They say that it is not worth making a life-long commitment, making a definitive decision, 'forever', because we do not know what tomorrow will bring. I ask you, instead to be revolutionaries. I ask you to swim against the tide; yes, I am asking you to rebel against the culture that sees everything as temporary and that ultimately believes you are incapable of responsibility, that believes you are incapable of true love."
(MESSAGE FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY IN KRAKOW, 15 AUGUST 2015)

My friends, you are capable of love! You are capable of giving yourself to the defense of human life in all its stages! The Holy Father is close to you and believes in you!

Now, it is my privilege to read to you a Message from the Holy Father, prepared for all of you gathered here in the Archdiocese of Washington, as well as for those assembled this morning in the Diocese of Arlington:

His Holiness Pope Francis sends warm greetings and the assurance of his closeness in prayer to the many thousands of young people from throughout America gathered in the Archdiocese of Washington and the Diocese of Arlington for the annual March for Life. His Holiness is profoundly grateful for this impressive testimony to the sacredness of every human life. As he has made clear, "so great is the value of human life, and so inalienable the right to life of an innocent child growing in the mother's womb, that no alleged right...can justify a decision to terminate that life" (Amoris Laetitia, 83). He trusts that this event, in which so many American citizens speak out on behalf of the most defenseless of our brothers and sisters, will contribute to a mobilization of consciences in defense of the right to life and effective measures to ensure its adequate legal protection. To all present, the Holy Father cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of strength and peace in the Lord.

*Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Secretary of State*

