

# **Pandemic battle should inspire fight for life in all forms, archbishop says**

BALTIMORE (CNS) – Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori said the country's protracted battle against COVID-19 should strengthen the faithful's commitment to the sanctity of life from protecting the unborn to opposing the death penalty.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the frailty of human life. We rightfully are doing all in our power to keep our loved ones and ourselves safe," Archbishop Lori wrote in an Oct. 9 column for the Catholic Review, the archdiocesan news outlet. His column marked October as Respect Life Month.

"We are rightfully concerned about public safety. Let us extend that concern to those whose lives are always endangered and who have no one to speak and act for them but ourselves," he said.

Everyday Americans have made many sacrifices to help blunt the effects of the pandemic, which has killed 216,169 Americans, as of Oct. 14.

In early March, much of the country shut down for weeks to ensure that hospitals did not become overwhelmed with patients. Public health experts said that dramatic intervention and continuing efforts such as wearing masks, avoiding large gatherings and practicing physical distancing have saved thousands of lives.

Archbishop Lori said this heroic effort to protect life must be carried over to Catholics' opposition to abortion, capital punishment and euthanasia.

He noted the importance of caring for creation, alleviating

poverty, welcoming immigrants and caring for the dignity of life at every stage of existence, but emphasized that “all these good works are undermined when we deny to the vulnerable their first and most fundamental right, the right to life.”

“We must not allow ourselves to be deluded into thinking that death is the way to deal with social challenges we face,” Archbishop Lori wrote.

Archbishop Lori referenced both St. John Paul II’s 1995 encyclical, “The Gospel of Life” as well Pope Francis’ new encyclical, “Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship,” released Oct. 4.

He quoted “Fratelli Tutti”: “Ultimately, persons are no longer seen as a paramount value to be cared for and respected, especially when they are poor and disabled, not yet useful – like the unborn – or no longer needed – like the elderly.”

In the column, Archbishop Lori wrote about touring a new pregnancy outreach center opening in downtown Baltimore next door to the city’s most prominent abortion provider, Planned Parenthood.

Operating out of a renovated storefront, Options@328, as the center is called, will offer sonograms, health screenings and help pregnant women access social services.

“I am grateful to the leadership of the Center for Pregnancy Concerns, who transformed that old and neglected building into a place of welcome, understanding, love, and compassion for both mothers and their unborn children,” Archbishop Lori wrote. “(There) they are gently encouraged to bring their babies to term and they are provided with help in giving their babies a strong start in life.”

He noted that Option@328 is in a struggling yet bustling part of Baltimore.

“The urban mayhem all about me, however, only added to my joy. In my heart, I knew that this is exactly where we need to proclaim and live the Gospel of life! And proclaim it we must – clearly, firmly and compassionately,” Archbishop Lori wrote.

The Center for Pregnancy Concerns planned to hold a virtual ribbon-cutting event for Options@328 on Oct. 22.

-- --

Swift is social media editor for the Catholic Review, the news outlet of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.