

Walking With Moms in Need:

— *Dignity Partnerships* —





In late 2019, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in recognition of the 25th anniversary year of *Evangelium vitae*, invited parishes to assess, expand, and communicate resources to pregnant moms and families in need. This ongoing program is entitled “Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service.” Unfortunately, the pandemic sidelined Archdiocesan efforts to invite parish participation.

Due to the importance of our efforts to promote the life and dignity of the human person, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee would like to offer you a very streamlined version of this program designed to be simple and accessible during these challenging times. We see these efforts as a launching point for future activities and enhanced partnerships with agencies that help woman-facing crisis in their pregnancy.

Our aim is to create a network of “Dignity Partnerships” that highlight the work that Catholics engage in to support women through pregnancy. As we know, the social teachings of our Catholic Church, rooted in our Gospel call, asks us to uphold the “Life and Dignity of the Human Person” and this project aims to enhance the “dignity” component of this teaching.

The full version of “Walking With Mom’s in Need” is available online and offers a robust Action Guide: <https://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/upload/WWMIN-Parish-Action-Guide-SECURE.pdf> This guide provides a wealth of resources for parishes to aid them in an expanded program as well as in this streamlined program. It is available in both English and Spanish.



Our streamlined version is broken into five phases:

Dignity Partnership Five Phase Plan

- PHASE ONE:** **Form *Dignity Partnership Committee***
– *First Month*

- PHASE TWO:** **Review *Milwaukee Archdiocesan Dignity Resource Inventory* and provide local updates** – *Second Month*

- PHASE THREE:** **Contact local *Pregnancy Help Center* and *Catholic Charities* to identify needs and establish intentional *Dignity Partnership***
– *Third Month*

- PHASE FOUR:** **Plan *Parish Response*- prayer and practical**
– *Fourth Month*

- PHASE FIVE:** **Kick off *Parish intentional Dignity Partnerships*** – *Fifth Month and Ongoing*



Below you will find instructions that will help you successfully pass through each phase:

PHASE ONE: Form Dignity Partnership Committee

1. Recruit parishioners to be part of a new committee (or subcommittee if there is already a prolife committee at your parish). Do this with whatever means are at your disposal (website announcements, Facebook, phone calls, pulpit and bulletin announcements, youth group recruitment).
2. Convene as a group and go over the **Dignity Partnership Five Phase Plan** and formulate a strategy to travel together through these five phases.

PHASE TWO: Review Archdiocese of Milwaukee Dignity Partner Resource Inventory and provide local updates

1. As a committee review the pregnancy and parenting resource list that has been provided to you by the Archdiocese. This resource list can be found on the Archdiocesan website under “Walking with Mom’s in Need: Dignity Partnerships”
2. Identify resources near your parish community. Discuss what types of needs you anticipate women may encounter. Draw on your own personal experiences.
3. Address these questions:
 - A. Are there any gaps in services?
 - B. Do we know of any agencies or groups in our area that are not included on this list?
 - C. Which group would we like to affiliate with this year in an intentional and enhanced manner? (We encourage all parishes to chose one local agency and also partner with Catholic Charities)
4. PLEASE add any previously unidentified agency to the list by emailing them to Deacon James Matthias, Director of Respect Life Ministry, matthiasj@archmil.org

PHASE THREE: Contact local Pregnancy Help Center and Catholic Charities to identify needs and establish intentional Dignity Partnership

1. Contact local pregnancy/parenting center of choice and inquire as to the ways your parish can assist their efforts through the use of time, talent and treasure. Identify your parish and express your intent to be a Dignity Partner and what that means.
2. We also encourage you to contact Catholic Charities to inquire as to the ways your parish can assist their efforts through the use of time, talent and treasure. Contact **Jennifer Layton** who can be reached at: jlayton@ccmke.org
3. Reconvene as a group and devise a plan as to how you can involve your parish in meeting the expressed needs of these two agencies.

PHASE FOUR: Plan Parish Response- Prayer and Practical

1. Based on input from your *Dignity Partners* formulate a plan on how your parish can meet the needs of your partners. Keep in mind your plan may need to be twofold. One sensitive to the limitations of COVID -19 and one that can be enacted post COVID-19.
2. Craft a one page document that describes and formalizes your new intentional and ongoing *Dignity Partnership* with these agencies.
3. Formulate a communication plan to generate excitement around these new partnerships. Work out the logistics involved in your plan. Guidance and resources can be found on the USCCB website with regards to this step. Every parish is different, so it is imperative that you have the autonomy to design your partnership in a manner that reflects the many nuances of your particular parish.
4. Gather prayer resources and plan ways in which they can be shared in your parish (prayers, Prayers of the Faithful, bulletin inserts, website posts, etc.). Guidance and resources can be found on the USCCB website.
5. Find a way to advertise the *Archdiocese of Milwaukee Dignity Resource Inventory* to your parish so that those who may be experiencing a crisis in pregnancy or parenting may more easily locate pertinent resources. Include those resources outside your parish boundaries. Many people travel to agencies outside their geographic location or have family and friends living in other locations that may be in need of support.

PHASE FIVE: Kick off Parish intentional *Dignity Partnerships*

1. Evaluate your plan and make sure you have three components in place:
 - A) Personal and parish prayer opportunities
 - B) Parish Education on your Dignity Partnership and posting of the **Archdiocese of Milwaukee Dignity Partner Resource Inventory**
 - C) Launch of your ongoing partnership program to meet the critical needs of your new partners.
2. Set into motion your *Dignity Partners* plan. May is a perfect time to do this given that it is the month of our Mother Mary and the month we celebrate mothers!



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Thank you, and God's blessings for engaging in our humble "*Dignity Partners*" mission. Please let us know of your good works and we will feature them on our Facebook page. It is such a blessing to belong to a prolife community that respects and honors the life and dignity of each and every person from conception onto natural death!