

**MARY MOTHER OF GOD – RESPECT FOR LIFE MINISTRY  
MEETING MINUTES**

A meeting of the Respect For Life Ministry was held on **Thursday, February 25, 2016** in Schellberg Hall. Philomena Cellilli started the meeting at 7:30 PM.

Deacon Sal Bonfiglio opened the session in the church by consecrating the work of the ministry through the protection of the Blessed Mother.

**ATTENDEES**

Philomena Cellilli, Fr. Sean, Deacon Sal Bonfiglio, Suzanne Bates, Jennifer Bragger, Don Bragger, Karen Leyendecker, Brenda Baron, Roseann Mertes, Barbara Gural, Karen Kerbrat, Laura Boyle, Don Thorsen, Carl Snipes, Bern Oles, Francisco Marin, Laureen Westover, Mai Chirinos

**ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION**

- Philomena Cellilli informed the group that this gathering was the first meeting and was intended to expand the existing Right to Life into the Respect For Life Ministry at Mary Mother of God Parish.
- Meetings will be held monthly on the last Thursday of the month at 7:30 PM in Schellberg Hall.
- All communications should be directed to Philomena to ensure coordinated efforts in activities.
- The MMOG website: The Respect For Life Ministry topic is currently located in the “Parish Life” heading under the “Social Concerns” section. It has been suggested and discussed that The Respect For Life Ministry be located under the Ministries Section. It was also suggested that the website begin to include all the activities focused on life issues occurring at the parish (e.g., the couple who recently adopted two children from Russia, the Adopt a Senior program, continuing with the family Mass schedule, service hours be expanded to more spiritual activities, , success stories on how faith has helped some parishioners.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- NJ Right to Life Banquet Dinner; Friday April 29, 2016; Hyatt Regency in New Brunswick.
- Carl Snipes (Somerset County Right to Life representative) informed the group that MMOG has two tickets available. MMOG could also register for a table for 10 attendees. Cost to attend would be the amount for a ticket at the table. Attendees would not need to be members of the NJ RTF organization. A decision must be made quickly since the reduced early rate ends on March 1, 2016.
- Philomena thanked Francisco Marin for attending to ensure the Spanish community is aware of, can participate in and can contribute to all activities of the Respect For Life Ministry.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

One focus of the meeting was to define the Mission Statement. Philomena shared the current and a proposed Mission Statement for review and discussion. She emphasized that the expanded emphasis of the ministry will focus on life issues spiritually – encompassing all life issues from conception to natural death.

For example:

*The Respect for Life Ministry spreads the word that we must cherish and uphold the sanctity of life from the moment of conception to natural death. Restoring respect for human life is the essential mission of the Mary Mother of God Parish Respect For Life Ministry.*

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The manner in which the ministry will accomplish this mission (i.e., the objectives) will be further described and discussed.

Several scripture verses to be included on the website in the MMOG Respect For Life website were shared. Attendees were asked to bring ideas for scripture verses to include on the website to the next meeting.

Other Areas of Interest Recommended by the Group Were:

- Spiritual educational influence
- Abstinence/Chastity
- Life issues such as the Zika virus scare
- Helping women who decide to keep the baby, often under difficult situations. Interactions with the Sisters of Life.
- Include members of the MMOG Youth Ministry at the Respect For Life meetings.
- Evangelization - Include religions of all denominations
- Encouraging couples to join the ministry
- NJ State and Federal legislation pertinent to all Respect for Life issues
- New adoption law changes in New Jersey
- New annulment rules

Discussion of all topics will continue at the next meeting.

**NEXT MEETING OF THE MMOG RESPECT FOR LIFE MINISTRY**

Thursday, March 31, 2016 – 7:30 to 9:00 PM  
Schellberg Hall

The meeting was adjourned at **9:20 PM**.

Submitted by:

Philomena Cellilli

Sue Bates