

The Inland See

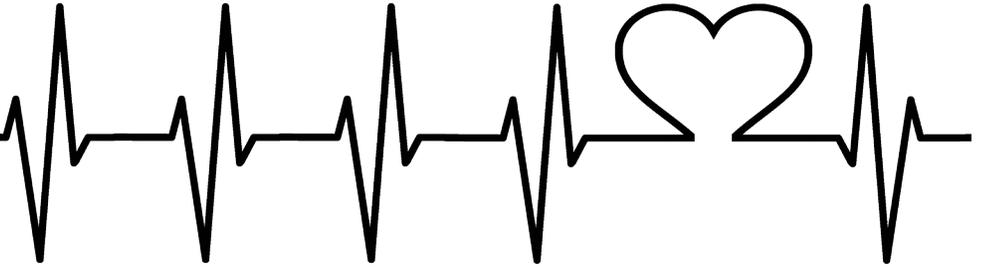
NEWS FROM

February 16 – 22, 2019

FOR THE DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON

Testimony

regarding H.57



I offer this testimony on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington, where I oversee the Respect Life Office on behalf of the 118,000 Catholics in our state; where we seek to be a people of life, advocating on behalf of the most vulnerable, recognizing the sacred dignity of every life from conception to natural death. I also speak as a husband, a father of six, an ordained deacon, soccer coach, and volunteer at Joseph's House in Burlington.

Like most Vermonters, we quietly go about our lives and do our best to help others. We have no desire to impose our way of life or religion on others, but there are times when the threat to life is so egregious that we are compelled for the sake of the common good of all to speak out publicly, especially on behalf of those who have no voice or are viewed as unwanted.

As Catholics, we are a people of life, and we cannot sit idly by when any life is threatened. It is why we support pregnancy help centers; it is why we support homeless shelters and so many outreach ministries; it is why we take care of folks at the end of their lives. It is why we take the time today to speak up for those who have no voice, both in the womb and for those whom society so often devalues.

This Christian approach to life is not new to us, but springs from our very identity as followers of Jesus Christ. Indeed, we see Jesus declaring in John 10:10 "...I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly."

You may recall that in ancient Rome the practice of infanticide was legal and often carried out through abandoning a newborn to die of exposure. It was the Christians, seeing the sacred dignity of every life, who would take it upon themselves to rescue these infants, take care of them and raise them. This response to human life is part of who we are. We are a people of life and we believe that all Vermonters are as well.

St. Augustine, speaking in the fourth century and part of that same Roman empire, notes that those who went to Mass would often say "we are going to life." We are a people of life and we believe that all Vermonters are as well.

This is not simply a Catholic issue, but a social justice issue. In the context of the broad reach of this proposed legislation, we stand in solidarity with other Vermonters of all faiths or no faith, to bear witness to the fundamental

truth that in the third trimester the mother carries a viable life that can live independent of the womb. Terminating this life for any reason or no reason at all is simply just wrong. This is infanticide.

Burlington Bishop Christopher Coyne in his statement on this bill notes: "HR 57 goes far beyond Roe vs. Wade, guaranteeing unrestricted abortion through all nine months of pregnancy and declaring the baby to have no individual rights. This means that a baby in the womb can be terminated right up to the moment of natural birth. My friends, that is not abortion. That is infanticide. And this law would legislate that right to an abortion – to that infanticide – not be "denied, restricted, or infringed by any government entity."

Wesley Smith, author and senior fellow at the Discovery Center notes that if this bill passes, "I do believe it will become the most radical abortion legalization statute in the world."

Is this really the best we can do? Is this really what Vermont wants to be known for? Is this what the good people of Vermont really desire? Is this the best we can do for the most vulnerable, including those coerced into abortion, those targeted for abortion because of their gender, or possible cognitive or physical disabilities? Can't we instead find ways to love and support all life?

Life should not and cannot be legislated out of existence. I do not understand this — this law takes us to a very dark place, not a place of life, but a place of darkness. On behalf of Catholics throughout this state and all people of good will, I urge us to recover our senses and be a people that affirms and advocates on behalf of the sacred dignity of life not one that seeks new ways to eliminate it.

—*Deacon Phil Lawson is the executive director of evangelization, catechesis, divine worship, marriage and family and respect life for the Diocese of Burlington. He can be reached at plawson@vermontcatholic.org.*



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON

To see more events or to submit your event to the diocesan calendar: vermontcatholic.org/events

UPCOMING EVENTS



03|02 SATURDAY Silent Day-Retreat

Our Lady of Life, Quebec

Join us for a silent day-retreat at Our Lady of Life (Quebec), one hour and 40 minutes from the Burlington area. Teaching (in French with simultaneous translation into English) given by a Carmelite friar on "The Visitation: Mystery of Encounter" Time for prayer, reading, walking and resting in the Lord, with Mass and Reconciliation. Lunch is in silence; dinner is joyful fellowship. (Passport or enhanced travel document needed.)

FOR MORE INFO: and to register, contact Teresa at email@ourladyoflifeinstitute.org



03|02 SATURDAY Our Lady of Fatima Devotions

Holy Family, Essex Junction • 8 - 9:30 am

First Saturday of every month, come to Our Lady of Fatima Devotions. Rosary and reconciliation begin at 8 am and Mass at 8:30.



03|02 SATURDAY Marriage Preparation Retreat

Blessed Sacrament, Stowe • 10:30 am - 5 pm

Come take a break from wedding preparation and spend time in prayer, sharing and fellowship with your fiancé and other engaged couples. Lunch and materials will be provided – **there is no cost for this retreat.** Prior Registration is required: vermontcatholic.org/event/marriage-preparation-retreat-stowe/



03|02 SATURDAY Wintertastic Celebration & Auction

Mount Anthony C.C., Bennington • 6 pm

To benefit the educational programs at the School of Sacred Heart St. Francis de Sales in Bennington
FOR MORE INFO: 802-442-2446



03|09 SATURDAY Padre Pio Devotions

Holy Family, Essex Junction • 8 - 10 am

The Padre Pio Prayer Group meets the second Saturday of each month. Rosary starts at 8 am followed by Mass, Special Intentions for the intercession of Saint Padre Pio and then learning about Padre Pio's life, ministry and spiritual gifts will follow in the Holy Family Parish Hall after Mass.



03|10 SUNDAY Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion

Cathedral of St. Joseph, Burlington • 3 pm

During the Rite of Election, celebrated by Bishop Coyne, the Church "elects" those seeking full initiation into the Church through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at Easter. The Church also recognizes those already-baptized Christians seeking full initiation into the Catholic Church and pledges the support of prayer as they journey toward Full Communion in the Catholic Church. Friends and family of those being participating in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion and all the faithful from around the diocese are invited to celebrate with us. A small reception follows the liturgy.



03|11, 18, 25 MONDAYS Acts of the Apostles

Holy Family, Essex Junction • 7 pm

Fr. Richard Berube will present Luke's Second Volume: Acts of the Apostles on three Mondays: March 11, 18, and 25. Call the Rectory at (802) 878-5331 or email holyfamilysecretary@comcast.net for a reservation.



03|15 FRIDAY Michael Mette Concert Event

St. Michael School, Brattleboro

7 - 8:30 pm

Join us for MJM7 — the Michael Mette Family Band in concert. Open to the whole family! A good will offering will be taken at the end of the event.



03|16 saturday Marriage Preparation Retreat

Christ the King, Rutland

9:30 am - 3 pm

A one-day Retreat for Engaged Couples. Come take a break from wedding preparation and spend time in prayer, sharing and fellowship with your fiancé and other engaged couples. Lunch and materials will be provided – prior Registration is required. There is no cost for this retreat.

FOR MORE INFO: vermontcatholic.org/event/marriage-preparation-retreat-day-rutland/



03|23 SATURDAY 2nd Annual Vermont Catholic Men's Conference

St. Anthony, White River Junction

9 am - 3 pm

Mass with Bishop Christopher Coyne. Keynote Speaker: Eric Sutulovich – Former NFL Coach. Guest Speakers: Msgr. John McDermott and Mr. Paul Kendall. Cost: \$40, and \$20 for those 21 years old and younger.

FOR MORE INFO: vermontcatholic.org/event/men/



03|23, 24 SATURDAY & SUNDAY High School Retreat

St. Anne's Shrine, Isle la Motte

All High School teens are welcome to join us for a retreat weekend of great talks, fun, fellowship, time for quiet reflection and journaling, confession and more. Father Jon Schnobrich will be an integral part of the weekend, along with other great speakers. \$45 per person.

FOR MORE INFO: <https://www.vermontcatholic.org/event/high-school-retreat-saint-annes-shrine/>

DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON CAREERS

Diocese: Respect Life Coordinator

*Diocese: Youth and Young Adult Ministry
Administrative Assistant*

*St. Joseph Residential Care Home,
Burlington: LPN*

**For More Info:
vermontcatholic.org/careers**



Permanent Diaconate Formation classes to begin in August.

*Learn how to apply at:
vermontcatholic.org/vermont/permanent-diaconate-formation-classes-to-begin*

Deadline for applications is March 1.

REGIONAL LAY FORMATION AND DIACONATE INFO NIGHTS SCHEDULE

Each session will run from 6:30 – 8 p.m.

Wed., Feb. 20 **St. Mary**, Springfield

Thurs., Feb. 21 **Christ the King**, Rutland

Tues., Feb. 26 **St. John Vianney**, S. Burlington

Wed., Feb. 27 **St. Theresa**, Orleans

Tues., March 5 **Holy Angels**, St. Albans

Mon., March 18 **Sacred Heart**, Bennington