



**MICHIGAN
CATHOLIC**
C O N F E R E N C E

We were Created for Such a Time as This
(Esther 4:14)

A Preaching Plan to Election Day
on Proposal 3

On November 8, 2022, the citizens of Michigan are going to vote on Proposal 3, the so-called Reproductive Freedom for All ballot proposal. In the past, when issues like this have come before the state, Michigan Catholic Conference and the (arch) dioceses in this state have offered a series of reflections on the various readings for Sunday Masses during the weeks leading up to the vote.

This Anything Goes Abortion Constitutional Amendment, however, is so devious and presents such a grave concern for the unborn, pregnant women in need, children, and parents, that a different approach is required. This packet of material is designed to assist priests and deacons with homily preparation in the seven weeks leading up to the general election, starting the weekend of September 24/25. This project was undertaken at the direction of the seven (arch) diocesan bishops by a team led by Father John Riccardo with ACTS XXIX. The goal is that no matter where one attends Mass during this time a consistent message will be heard. The themes within this homiletics helper are not tied to the weekly readings. While this is most unusual, it will be highly effective in raising awareness of this unjust proposal.

Each Sunday has a theme and a goal for what those in the pews will take away and be able to discern through the week. In addition to this series, included within are suggested prayers of the faithful that tie into the messages from the homilies. Along with bulletin inserts, and messaging for parish websites and social media, the parish can be immersed in the themes of the week. By these means, we hope not only to defeat the unjust proposal, but to help us think ever more clearly on critical issues facing us as citizens of Michigan and disciples of Jesus.

In an earlier time, the effort to defeat Assisted Suicide, Proposal B of 1998, was overwhelming. Of Catholics who attended Mass once or more a week, 92% voted No on that proposal. The outcome of Proposal 3 will have a critical impact on the lives of the people of this state for generations. It is imperative it be defeated. It is hoped the information provided here will assist in another overwhelming effort in support of human dignity and life, for, “We were created for such a time as this.” (Esther 4:14)

Week 1

Theme: Statewide Focus to Educate, Understand, and Pray

Talking points:

- What is starting today across the state in every Catholic Church: a seven week “retreat”
- Why we’re doing this extraordinary thing: the November election and the Reproductive Freedom for All amendment on the ballot
- What we’re going to be doing: at every Catholic Church across Michigan, we’re going to reflect on a single theme that is related to what is in front of us
- What’s at stake: not simply abortion on demand up until birth, but serious attacks on parental rights and other things that we need to be aware of
- Ask the people to make sure we all find the language of this proposal and read it through, together with a thorough analysis, so that we can understand just how unreasonable it is
- Call the diocese/parish to fast in some way until the election for the defeat of this proposal
- Invite the diocese/parish to pray the rosary on a given day for the same purpose
- Make clear this is appropriate for us to discuss in Church and reflect on together, since these are human issues and we are called to be both disciples of Jesus and citizens of this State.
- Make clear that these things aren’t matters of belief so much as they are matters of careful thought; in other words, it’s not as though we believe abortion is wrong because we’re Catholic; rather, we think abortion is unjust because it is the killing of an innocent human being. This doesn’t come from the Catechism; it comes from science and medicine.

Goal:

- The people of the diocese/parish will understand that starting today the Church throughout Michigan is doing something most

extraordinary due to a most important amendment proposal on the ballot in November. Calling each of us by virtue of our baptism to speak in a united voice in charity, truth, and justice.

Week 2:

Theme: Either/or: The critical issue

Story:

On December 1, 1955, a woman was coming home from work. She took the bus. She took the bus every day both to and from work. She was sitting in the 11th row, as the first 10 rows were reserved for white people, and she wasn't white. The first ten rows quickly filled up and she was told to move by the bus driver. She refused. She was ordered by the bus driver and still refused. Finally, the police were called and she was arrested and charged, officially, with resisting the orders of a bus driver. Her name was Rosa Parks. And so began the Montgomery bus strike and the civil rights movement. Today there are streets all across Michigan cities, and throughout the country, named for her. What is often not known is how much Rosa's faith motivated what she did. "In the eyes of God," she said, "all people were free and I was going to live like a free person. It was time for someone to stand up, or, in my case, to sit down." Rosa knew it was unreasonable to think that skin color made some people of more worth and dignity than others. To be sure, as we've seen the past few years, we still have a very long way to go in this country before we all act accordingly, but at least in the stated law injustice has been written out.

Talking points:

- It's really a very simply either/or in front of us on abortion. Either all human beings are persons or else only some are.
- Science and medicine, not the Bible and the Catechism, tell us that from the moment of conception there is a new human being, with its own unique DNA, needing only nutrients and an environment (the same things we all do) to continue to grow
- If the scientific and medical data are so clear that this is a human being, how is abortion justified? It's denied the status of personhood
- But if personhood isn't something that all human beings have simply because they're human, that means we are giving raw power to

someone or other people to arbitrarily determine which human beings are and are not human persons.

- It is reasonable to think that this amendment is an unjust law and a dangerous pattern of thinking: what are the criteria after all? Who decides those?
- Why, after all, should we care about the poor? Or the immigrant? Or the sick? Or the elderly? Or another race? Because they're human, and all human beings should be considered as persons and have rights, most especially the right to life, without which no other right has any value.
- Thus, we have laws and this amendment would imply only some human beings are persons under the law
- Consider alerting parents that next week they may want to take shifts if they have younger children coming to Mass, or perhaps step out during the homily and listen together afterwards

Goal:

- Bring to people's attention that it is a freer, more just and more enjoyable place to live where all human beings have the status of persons and therefore have rights, most especially the right to life, without which no other right makes sense.

Week 3:

Theme: Getting beyond the rhetoric

Story:

Possibly Dr. Bernard Nathanson, co-founder of NARAL and the former head of the largest abortion provider in the world. Though he was responsible for tens of thousands of abortions, including one of his own children, his response to seeing via ultrasound what was actually taking place.

Dr. Anthony Levatino, an obstetrician/gynecologist who performed 1,200 abortions before becoming pro-life. He served as an expert witness in front of the U.S. Congress on the issue of late term abortion. It took a terrible tragedy with his own child before he woke up to realize he was killing other's children. He is now a member of Heartbeat International's Medical Advisory Council, highlighting the work of our pregnancy resource centers. His testimony also talks about what abortion really is.¹

Talking points:

- This is a hard week, to be sure. Lead with Mercy.
- It must be delivered without stirring up hatred, fear
- But we must put flesh behind the word “abortion”
- Define what is an abortion: the direct and intentional killing of a human being prior to birth
- Though we see graphic depictions of death on all our devices and more or less all channels, we never, with perhaps one exception, have seen an abortion on film
- Imagine what would happen if we did
- Help people understand how abortions are done, as sensitively as possible, in various trimesters²

¹ [Dr. Levatino Destroys Abortion in 2 Minutes - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZXQBhTszpU&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZXQBhTszpU&t=3s)

² See Human Life International's video resources at [Tools Used for Abortion: Descriptions, Pics, and Videos - https://www.hli.org/resources/tools-used-for-abortion/](https://www.hli.org/resources/tools-used-for-abortion/) and [What's Partial-Birth Abortion? - https://www.hli.org/abortion-videos/whats-partial-birth-abortion/](https://www.hli.org/abortion-videos/whats-partial-birth-abortion/) or Live Action's resource videos at [Abortion Procedures - https://www.abortionprocedures.com/abortion-pill/](https://www.abortionprocedures.com/abortion-pill/)

- It may also be helpful here to possibly offer excerpts from various U.S. Supreme Court decisions that describe abortion techniques

Goal:

- To leave with a sobered understanding of what actually happens in an abortion

Week 4:

Theme: Who's Right?

Story:

Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children, including the privilege of teaching the faith and raising their children with Christian values. Moms and Dads also work to guide their children, preserve their innocence and childhoods, and protect them from harm.

Talking points:

- The key this week is to address the fact that Proposal 3, the Reproductive Freedom for All amendment, isn't only about abortion; it's a serious attack on parental rights as well.
- Proposal 3 presupposes that the state - and even children themselves - know what is best for children/themselves—*not* their parents.
- The words of the amendment confer a fundamental right to “reproductive freedom” for everyone, without any age limits. That means children will likely be able to invoke these rights without your parental consent or even your knowledge. They may even apply against your wishes, and there might be nothing that you as a parent can do about it.
- Lawmakers, the governor, and any other elected officials will be unlikely to mitigate the damage or restore parental rights because these are state Constitutional rights being conferred to children and teens—rights which will override other state laws.
- If this amendment is voted into the Constitution, another vote of the people will be the only way to change it, aside from a court decision, which is unlikely. Parental rights should not be left to chance – requiring a lawsuit and hoping for a favorable court ruling.
- Other people—including teachers, counselors, or even other adults—will be able to help your child exercise these rights to reproductive freedom: to pregnancy, contraception, sterilization, and abortion, all without parental consent or even knowledge.

- Read the start of the amendment again, keeping in mind that, as written, this will apply to teens and younger children:
 - “*Every individual has a fundamental right to reproductive freedom, which entails the right to make and effectuate decisions about all matters relating to pregnancy, including but not limited to prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, contraception, sterilization, abortion care, miscarriage management, and infertility care.*”
- Foreseeable situations for minors and teens under this Constitutional Amendment:
 - If your teen has a consensual relationship with an adult that results in pregnancy, the adult would be able to help your teen obtain an abortion without you ever knowing about it.
 - School health clinics will be able to provide contraception to your minor children without informing you.
 - Hospitals and doctors, without your knowledge or consent, will be able to sterilize your child – either due to gender confusion and transition or to avoid future pregnancies.
 - Teachers, counselors, coaches, and others will be able to help your teens and children obtain abortions against your wishes, and they will not be held accountable if the child consented. These same teachers and coaches could even perform your child’s abortion themselves and still be unaccountable, because this constitutional language prohibits the state from penalizing, prosecuting or taking any other “adverse action” against someone for assisting in an abortion.
 - Depending on how aggressively government officials decide to enforce the proposal’s language, parents could also be in jeopardy of losing custody if they do not support their child obtaining contraception, an abortion, or gender transition services, since those would all be deemed “fundamental rights.”
- This proposal will render parents powerless to protect their children and teens regarding sexuality and reproduction.

Goal:

- That people walk away with clarity that Proposal 3, the Reproductive Freedom for All amendment, isn't only about abortion but is a direct attack on parental rights too.

Week 5:

Theme: As far as the East is from the West

Story:

One of the more convicting people of the 20th century was Dorothy Day. As a child she had nominal faith but soon abandoned that and became an atheist, an anarchist and a communist. She had several affairs and twice tried to take her own life. She also had an abortion. But in December of 1927, Day was baptized and became one of the most consistent Catholic figures of the 20th century. A daily communicant, a woman of intense prayer before the Eucharist and a devotee of the rosary, Day was a champion for persons on the margins, much like a woman she met later in life was – Mother Teresa. Her cause for canonization is open currently and while it's not yet definitively concluded the fact that the Church is considering the canonization of a woman who had an abortion is a reason for extraordinary hope for all of us in general, and for many of us in particular

Talking points:

- Given the statistics on abortion it is reasonable to presume that at every Mass today here and across the State there is someone present, and perhaps many present, who have, for whatever reason, either had or been involved in some way in an abortion. The God who is rich in mercy wants to speak today in a special way to you
- There is nothing – simply nothing – that God won't forgive
- The devil has a relentless strategy with those who have experienced this trauma: God's mercy is not for you. This is a lie
- Psalm 103:10-12
- Jesus, St. Paul tells us in Romans, died for the ungodly. And that's all of us. The cross and resurrection of Jesus are not a reward for good behavior; Jesus did all He did because we are all desperately in need (cf. Rom 5:6)
- The only thing that's different from person to person is what our sin is, but we're all in need

- Unlike us, though, God loves to forgive, He loves to welcome home, He loves to give us second chances
- If you have not yet experienced His mercy in the sacrament of reconciliation, please come this week.
- God allows us to begin again
- Some of us may know someone, perhaps even someone close to us, who has suffered from a prior abortion. The Church's abortion healing ministry, Project Rachel, is here to actively assist and extend a healing hand of mercy to those in need. Go to HopeAfterAbortion.com or call 888-456-HOPE.

Goal:

- To speak to those present who have had, or been involved in, an abortion and to let them know God's forgiveness is real and His mercy is abundant and to invite those who have not yet experienced His mercy in the sacrament of reconciliation to come in the days ahead.

Week 6:

Theme: Our role in the world as disciples

Story:

Sophia Scholl was a German student, active in the White Rose – a non-violent resistance group to Hitler and the Nazi party.³ In 1943, she was caught delivering anti-war propaganda and, with her brother Hans Scholl, was executed for high treason. Sophie Scholl has become an important symbol of anti-Nazi resistance in Germany.

At the age of twelve, she joined a pseudo-Nazi organization, the League of German Girls. Initially, Sophie enjoyed the activities of the group, and she was promoted to Squad Leader. Over time Sophie became uneasy about the conflict between her conscience and the creeping Nazi ideology of the organization.⁴

Witnessing evil changed her thinking: In 1937, her brothers and some of her friends were arrested for participating in the German Youth Movement. This incident left a strong impression on Sophie and helped to crystallize her opposition to the Nazi regime. In 1942, her father was later sent to prison for making a critical remark about Hitler.⁵

Sophie developed a strong Christian faith that emphasized the underlying dignity of every human being. This religious faith proved an important cornerstone of her opposition to the increasingly all-pervading Nazi ideology of German society.

Sophie and her brother Hans decide to take action: Sophie and Hans were part of a group that became known as the White Rose. The group began to write leaflets that quoted theology and encouraged Germans to listen to different teachings such as the Bible and Aristotle instead of Hitler. The

³ Except where noted, the summary below is taken from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6bLWH9bijQ>.

⁴ <https://www.biographyonline.net/women/sophie-scholl.html>

⁵ *Id.*

final leaflet called for Germans to take a stand against the Nazi government.

Talking points:

- We can be good in the Church often at turning amazing realities into boring textbook definitions that leave us unaffected
- Baptism is one of those realities
- When we were baptized we were made priests, prophets and kings. So what?
- We're all priests by baptism (some of us are also priests by the sacrament of orders, but that's a different kind of priesthood)
- Priests have access to God. This is amazing! Try calling the governor right now, or the president, or your doctor: good luck. But we can talk to God anytime!
- What do priests do? "It is the priest's task to bring another before God in prayer." (Abbot Jeremy Driscoll)
- We are all able to go before the Creator of the Universe, the Father of Mercies, and bring those most in need before Him. Women in crisis. Children who are threatened. Families in need. Politicians who, for whatever reason, are promoting and championing abortion. Women and men who are hurting over past decisions to end the life of their child. Anyone!
- What do prophets do? They speak on God's behalf. In the Scriptures we see God raise up prophets to speak on His behalf when injustices are taking place.
- So too today He is calling us, in love, to speak up on behalf of those who are being unjustly treated.
- This is what Sophie Scholl did.
- We can all do this simply by voting this year, for to vote No on Proposal 3, the Reproductive Freedom for All amendment, is to speak up on behalf of the unborn, but not just them to be sure
- We are all kings too by baptism (or better, sharers in Christ's Kingship)

- This can be challenging for us to understand first because we're Americans and we don't have kings, and second because our image of kings (and queens) is often not a biblical one.
- Kings in Scripture have 3 principle tasks: to lead the army in battle, to defend widows and orphans, and to look after the poor
- The amazing work of crisis pregnancy centers throughout our community is an acting out of this kingship
- It's often said we as Christians or Catholics only care about the unborn child. That's simply not true.
- Highlight perhaps a local center that is doing great work to care for women and families in crisis
- Highlight the accompaniment that is occurring in your parish through Walking with Moms in Need where everyone's gifts are valued.

Goal:

- That each person would leave with a profound awareness of the gift and task of their baptism in general and their role in the world as priest, prophet and king.

Week 7:

Theme: For such a time as this

Talking points:

- Homily to close out the series
- The theme comes from the book of Esther
- Just as God created Esther for that moment in history, so God has created us for this time and these days. We don't just happen to be alive right now. We have been created to live now, with all that's going on in this world and in our State and we are not to stand by
- We are celebrating today and every Sunday the resurrection of Jesus. It's a little Easter, if you will
- Easter Sunday was the day Jesus began the recreation of this world which God loves
- One day He will gloriously return and all things will be made new
- But in the meantime we have a part to play, work to do
- Even though some of us have sung a song by this title, we can't actually build the city of God; but we can build for it. And we are called to do just this!
- In our work, in our family life, in our voting, in our social media posts, in everything we do, we can do all we can to make this world genuinely more human and more just
- It will be costly, just as it was for Rosa Parks and those in the civil rights movement, just as it was for Sophie Scholl and those in the White Rose movement. But it is worth it!
- Bring the series to a prophetic crescendo that comes from the homilist's heart

Goal:

- To rouse the faithful to play their part in this day and age in which God has chosen for us to live.

Prayers of the Faithful Template For Seven Week Focus on Proposal 3

Week 1

Theme: Statewide Focus to Educate, Understand, and Pray

For the Church and its leaders. May we strive in a unified voice to uphold and defend the dignity of the human person in all stages of life, born and unborn.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For Pope Francis. May he speak clearly and unambiguously on behalf of life, most particularly the life of the unborn.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For our [arch]bishop, _____, may he shepherd and pastor this [arch]diocese with the heart of the Father as we embark upon this seven week retreat prayerfully focusing on the defense of the unborn, the rights of parents and the defeat of Proposal 3, the Reproductive Freedom for All amendment.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For our nation and its leaders. May they speak and act consistently on behalf of the most basic of all rights, the right to life.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For the state of Michigan and those who govern us. May they think clearly on matters of utmost importance, especially, but not only, the dignity of all life, born and unborn.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Week 2

Theme: Either/or: The critical issue

For the Universal Church. May we be a voice of truth and justice, inspiring all nations to speak and defend our unborn brothers and sisters.
Let us pray to the Lord.

For Our Holy Father. May he lead and speak as Jesus on behalf of those who have no voice. *Let us pray to the Lord.*

For our [arch]bishop. May his leadership and advocacy on behalf of life inspire all bishops to lead accordingly.
Let us pray to the Lord.

For our nation and our leaders. May they fight for the most defenseless among us, namely the unborn.
Let us pray to the Lord.

For our state's leaders who don't yet think with the mind of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may they come to see that all life, both born and unborn, are made in the image and likeness of God and thus worthy of all the protections afforded to every human person.
Let us pray to the Lord.

For those of us here today in the pews. May we be inspired by the example of Rosa Parks who fought for justice. May we be advocates of truth and justice and speak courageously that nothing justifies taking the life of our unborn children.
Let us pray to the Lord.

For the sick ...

For those who have gone before us ...

Week 3

Theme: Getting beyond the rhetoric

For the Church and its leaders. May we be unafraid to speak boldly and confidently the Gospel of Life.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For our [arch]bishop, _____, may he shepherd and pastor this [arch]diocese with the heart of the Father as we continue on in this seven week retreat prayerfully focusing on the defense of the unborn, the rights of parents and the defeat of Proposal 3, the Reproductive Freedom for All amendment.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For the state of Michigan and its leaders. May they govern so as to bring about a culture of life and may our citizens be courageous in speaking and voting on behalf of the unborn.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For the conversion of abortion providers. May they, like Bernard Nathanson, come to see what abortion truly is and be moved to fight for the life of our unborn brothers and sisters.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For the sick ...

For those who have died ...

Week 4

Theme: Who's Right?

For the Church, Our Holy Father Pope Francis, bishops and priests. May we strive to speak on behalf of the family and the unique privilege parents have to raise, defend and protect their children.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For our nation. May we be a beacon of light and hope to a darkened world that does not value the life of the unborn. May we promote just laws for all human persons, including our preborn children.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For the state of Michigan and its leaders. May they come to recognize that parents, not the state, know what is best for their children.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For those of us in the pews. May we have ever greater clarity about Proposal 3, the Reproductive Freedom for All amendment, understanding that what's at stake is not only abortion, but also a direct attack on parental rights as well.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For the sick ...

For our deceased brother and sisters ...

Week 5

Theme: As far as the East is from the West

For the Church and all those who minister to God's people. May we speak faithfully and compassionately on behalf of God who is rich beyond all measure in mercy and forgiveness. *Let us pray to the Lord.*

For our country and its leaders. May we be known as a nation that advocates for families, the unborn and those who have suffered the trauma of abortion.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For those men and women who have experienced the pain of abortion. May they experience the healing, freedom and restoration that God so desperately wants to give them and be inspired by the model of Servant of God Dorothy Day's example of conversion and new life in Jesus Christ.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For our [arch]diocese. May we be a community that bears the message that we are not defined by our sin, but rather as sons and daughters of a Father that loves to forgive, no matter what's in our past.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For the sick ...

For our beloved dead ...

Week 6

Theme: Our role in the world as disciples

For the Church and its leaders. May we have absolute clarity on the mission of Jesus and our mission as disciples and strive to be agents of re-creation and transformation in this world that God so loves, tirelessly advocating for a culture of life and love.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For the United States and those who govern. May they govern with a heart for those most vulnerable and defenseless among us, stewarding well the right to life for everyone, most particularly the unborn.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For our [arch]diocese, May we be known as a community that welcomes the pregnant mother in crisis, strives to provide the material and spiritual support needed for both mother and child and a place of refuge for those most in need.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For those of us in the pews. May we have a renewed understanding and appreciation for the gift of our baptism and our role as priests, prophets and kings as we speak and act up on behalf of the unborn and encourage others to do the same.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For the state of Michigan in this critical election. May our vote on Proposal 3, the Reproductive Freedom for All amendment, be a vote for the unborn and families.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For those who labor tirelessly to protect life through the great work of crisis pregnancy centers. May they be richly rewarded for their efforts to protect women and their children.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For the sick ...

For those who have died ...

Week 7

Theme: For such a time as this

For the Church, our Holy Father, and all bishops, priests and clergy. May we be a shining example to all the world as to what it means to be human and to be a more just society.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For our nation and our leaders. May they be inspired to lead with the heart of Esther, fighting for what is right, good and just for all human persons, especially the unborn.

For the state of Michigan. May we be known as a state that defends life, the family and the rights of parents.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For those of us here today. May we come to recognize that like Esther, we were born for such a time as this and make a decision to be great, playing our part in this age God has chosen us to live, recognizing the gravity of the upcoming election and choosing to vote for life.

Let us pray to the Lord.

For the sick ...

For our beloved dead ...