

Archbishop's House
150 St George's Road
Southwark
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Pastoral Letter

'A Day for Life'
Sunday, 1st July 2007

My dear people,

The celebration of the Day for Life is an occasion for deep prayer and serious reflection. Every day we see on our television screens images of war and terrorism. They show the terrible suffering that ensues when men and women do not respect the absolute value of life. Violence in all its forms shames humanity and causes fear and division in the world. As Christians we cherish life and the protection of all life, from conception until natural death should be an integral part of our faith and our mission.

The theme of the Day for Life is "Blessed is the fruit of your womb", and the celebration of the Day for Life this year has a particular significance since we mark the fortieth anniversary of the legalisation of abortion. Over the past forty years millions of lives have been lost through the termination of pregnancies. During these years there has been mounting scientific evidence of the evil of abortion. Yet our society has come to accept it as a matter of personal choice. The Day for Life is an opportunity to bring this matter before God in a spirit of prayer and reparation. There will be no change in the legislation until there is a change in the hearts and minds of people. We must not lose hope that that prayer will be answered. Nor should we be afraid to speak out and to proclaim confidently the Gospel of Life.

This year we also mark the 25th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's visit to England. In our Cathedral he administered the Sacrament of the Sick. This Sacrament is an affirmation of life, of hope for healing and of expectation of that fullness of life which will be given to those who rise with him in glory. As Christians we are those who look to the Lord for healing and new life. Let us also be bearers of this message to the people we know and to the world in which we live.

With my prayers and my blessing,

+ Kevin

Archbishop of Southwark

5th June 2007