



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

MEMORANDUM

To: The Parishioners of the Brighton Community and All People of Good Will
From: The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano
Dr. Shannon Kilbridge, Director, Office of Life Issues
Mrs. Marlene Bessette, President and CEO, Catholic Family Center
Mr. Jack Balinsky, Diocesan Director, Catholic Charities
Reverend Gary Tyman, Pastor, Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Anne Parishes
Date: July 21, 2021
Re: Proposed Construction of Planned Parenthood Office in Brighton

Recent questions regarding the proposed construction of a Planned Parenthood location in Brighton has called us, once again, to speak on behalf of the vulnerable and marginalized in our community. Our Catholic faith compels us to uphold the dignity of all life, from conception to natural death, and to be the voice for the voiceless in all circumstances. In this instance, we do so on behalf of the unborn and their mothers, who disproportionately struggle with poverty and lack of sufficient resources. Indeed, it is our failure as a society to adequately address the issues of education, employment, support of family life and the great scar of racism that often serve as the rationale for mothers to seek out abortion, believing it to be the only option. Black and Hispanic women accounted for 47% of the abortions in Monroe County in 2018, according to the most recently available NYS Vital Statistics data, while only accounting for approximately 13% of the total population.

It is our responsibility as disciples of Christ to work to address these issues in our society and our duty to do so as a part of a consistent life ethic, where we advocate as well for the end of the death penalty and resist the push for physician assisted suicide in our State. Our local parishes in the Brighton area, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Anne, St. Thomas More, and Our Lady Queen of Peace, work to support the outreach offered at St. Joseph Neighborhood Center, Bethany House, Saint's Place, Mary's Place, House of Mercy and the Center for Youth's Crisis Nursery. Additionally, our Catholic Charities services provide robust care for people in Monroe County and beyond, as they seek assistance with the many challenges facing those on the margins. We encourage everyone to prayerfully consider supporting these organizations with their time, talent, or financial contributions, and to find other ways to walk with women in crisis pregnancies by offering life giving assistance.

In the particular instance of the expansion of Planned Parenthood services into the Brighton community, within the parish boundary of Our Lady of Lourdes, we encourage all of the faithful

to charitably and peacefully make their opposition known to the Town of Brighton, and to continue to work tirelessly on behalf of those who need our protection.

Let us unite our hearts with the heart of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, who tells us in *The Joy of the Gospel*:

"Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenseless and innocent among us... this defense of unborn life is closely linked to the defense of each and every other human right. It involves the conviction that a human being is always sacred and inviolable, in any situation and at every stage of development."

Evangelii Gaudium, para 213