Patron Saints for the
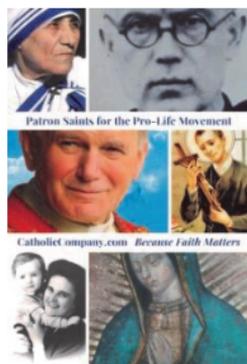## Pro-Life Movement

This month is Respect Life Month.

"One of the most fundamental moral teachings of the Catholic Church, which has come into stark conflict with the spirit of the world today, is the God-given sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death". In today's times, "the widespread rejection of such a fundamental truth sparked the faithful to start the pro-life movement" This movement seeks to protect and advocate for the human rights of the most vulnerable and innocent among us–especially the unborn"., [The Catholic Company, 01/17]

The following 6 holy men and women are noted for their heroic witness to the sanctity of human life and the necessity to protect unborn children.

St. Gerard Majella (April 6, 1726-Oct. 16, 1755) was a Redemportorist lay brother who, s a young man was unjustly accused by an unwed mother of fathering her child. His response was silence and the woman, seeing his holiness, eventually recanted her accusation. This led to him being the patron saint of pregnant women, mothers, childbirth, unborn children and the pro-life movement.

St. Maximillian Kolbe (Jan. 8, 1894 –Aug.14, 1941) was a Polish Franciscan friar and priest who lived during the terrible years of the Nazi regime. When a fellow prisoner (who had a wife and children) received a death sentence, Father Kolbe offered to take his place; he was starved for two weeks in the starvation bunker, before being killed by lethal injection.

St. Gianna Beretta Molla (Oct. 4, 1922 – April 28, 1962) was an Italian doctor, wife, and mother, and a devout Catholic. When she suffered life-threatening complications with her fourth pregnancy, she refused to abort her child as suggested and instead chose to undergo risky surgery in an attempt to save both her life and the life of her child. She told her doctors: *"This time it will be a difficult delivery, and they may have to save one or the other—I want them to save my baby."* Seven days later St. Gianna died. She was 39 years old.

St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta (Aug. 26, 1910 – Sept. 5, 1997) fought for all human life in a world full of materialism and indifference. She was a fearless advocate for the unborn, and opened orphanages to care for unwanted children and help get adopted by loving married couples.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is the world-famous apparition of St. Juan Diego (Dec. 9, 1531).   The Blessed Mother's appearance to a people deeply rooted in demonic human sacrifice rituals forever changed millions of native Mexicans who converted to the Catholic faith, putting an end to their human sacrifice. Because abortion is a modern-day human sacrifice, Our Lady of Guadalupe is the patroness of the pro-life movement.

Pope St. John Paul II (May 18, 1920 – April 2, 2005) personally witnessed the horrible trampling of basic human rights by the Nazis and others. One of the central themes of his pontificate was to protect and promote respect for human life from conception to natural death. He especially defended the unborn and became a champion for the pro-life cause with his many exhortations and papal encyclicals which admonished the world and educated all people regarding the sanctity of all human life.

May all these wonderful saints intercede for us from heaven in the global fight to respect all life, including that of unborn children.

Judy Pearson