

**YOU CAN BE AN ANGEL
AND YOUR PARISH CAN BE
A HOST OF ANGELS**



The Gabriel Project is a parish-based ministry to support pregnant mothers and their unborn children, conducted under the direction of the Office of Public Policy & Social Concerns, Archdiocese of San Francisco.

Angel Gabriel

In the Gospel of Luke, the Angel Gabriel told Mary the good news that a child would be born and that she was to be the Mother of our Savior. When she asked, "How can this be?" the angel told her not to be afraid for "nothing is impossible with God." The Gabriel Project announces the same comforting message to frightened pregnant mothers:

Fear not, for God is with you! Nothing is impossible with God.

Prayer for Mother and Child

Heavenly Father,
Who has given us the great gift of life,
bless and guide all pregnant mothers
that they might respect and cherish
the gift of life growing within them.
Help each mother to accept her child
as an irreplaceable gift from you.
Grant that all her needs be met.

Bless all children yet unborn.
Watch over them as they grow and
develop in the embrace of their mothers'
wombs. Form them and shape them
that they might be born healthy.
Grant that they might be welcomed at
birth with tender love and deep joy.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Amen

The Role of the Parish

The parish community announces that they see in the creation of each child a fresh expression of God's unfailing love and their commitment to offer assistance to pregnant mothers in need. They make their message known on a "Sign of Hope" placed in front of their church which also displays the icon depicted on the cover of this brochure along with an expression of outreach - **PREGNANT? NEED HELP?** - and a toll-free phone number (Helpline).

When a call for help is received, the Helpline volunteer contacts the parish coordinator at the nearest participating church to where the caller lives. The coordinator contacts the caller and makes an initial assessment of her situation. A parish volunteer ("Angel") is assigned the responsibility for ongoing contact with the mother throughout her pregnancy and somewhat beyond. An initial meeting is arranged to further assess her needs.

The parish community responds with love by providing spiritual, emotional, and material support to help meet those needs.

Through prayer and action the parish community assures the mother that she has their love and the love of Christ. If a mother has been abandoned by family or her child's father, the parish community can lovingly help her overcome her sense of loss and loneliness.

Kinds of Assistance

By employing their individual talents, collaborating with various ministries in the parish or diocese and utilizing community resources, parishioners stand ready to provide a mother with the kinds of assistance that she needs in caring for her child. These may include:

- Friendship and emotional support
- Pastoral care and counseling
- Transportation
- Prenatal care
- Baby items
- Education
- Employment
- Housing
- Adoption
- Financial assistance

Mobile Sign of Hope



Everyone can make pregnant mothers in need of help aware of *The Gabriel Project* simply by driving their vehicles. Our car decal (displayed above) is an excellent way to reach out to many pregnant mothers in northern California because the central helpline is shared by multiple dioceses. See our contact details on the back of this brochure to order.

History

In 1973 the pastor of St. Michael Parish in Houston, put a sign outside the rectory which said: If you will have your baby, this parish will help you in every way.

That was the seed of *The Gabriel Project*. In 1990/91 it was developed throughout the Corpus Christi and Galveston-Houston dioceses. It has since spread throughout the country and has merited the enthusiastic endorsement of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: *Begin a parish-based ministry to pregnant women and their children. **The Gabriel Project**, developed in the Diocese of Galveston-Houston, is excellent and is spreading across the nation. Volunteers in the parish are trained to help a woman through her pregnancy – with practical assistance, spiritual and emotional guidance, and help in accessing needed services.* (USCCB)

**Most Reverend George Niederauer
Archbishop of San Francisco:**

*The USCCB's "Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities" notes that one of the objectives of a parish pro-life committee should be to "develop or adopt a parish-based ministry to pregnant women and their children." **The Gabriel Project** answers this call. It embodies the practical support that the bishops promise pregnant women.*

Your Help is Needed

The participation of many parishes is critical to the success of our Archdiocesan outreach to pregnant mothers in need.

The easier it is for parishes to participate, the better. To this end, printed materials, training of parish volunteers, the central toll-free helpline, and overall project coordination are provided to parishes at no cost.

The Gabriel Project is a marvelous way to show the community that your parish cares about pregnant mothers in need and that there is no reason for any mother within its boundaries to feel that she is helpless and alone.

**PLEASE CONTACT US FOR
INFORMATION ON HOW YOU AND
YOUR PARISH CAN PARTICIPATE.**

THE GABRIEL PROJECT

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