



Take Action Sunday A Step-by-Step Guide for Parish Use

“People in every nation enhance the social dimension of their lives by acting as committed and responsible citizens, not as a mob swayed by the powers that be. Let us not forget that responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.”

—Pope Francis’ *Evangelii Gaudium*, November 2013

INTRODUCTION

When the faithful participate in grassroots advocacy by contacting their elected officials to urge them to support laws that protect life and religious liberty, **we are answering the Church’s call to faithful and responsible citizenship**. What is more, we are actively defending vulnerable life and our cherished right of religious liberty. It is important to remember that the Church is not a political party and that we do not work for or against particular candidates. Rather, **we advocate for public policies that seek the common good and build the culture of life**.

Human Life Action, an initiative of NCHLA (National Committee for a Human Life Amendment) which was founded by the U.S. bishops in 1974, provides an e-mail action alert system that makes it easy for citizens to engage in effective advocacy for laws that protect life and liberty. We know from over 40 years of experience that when millions of Catholics raise their voices as one we are heard on Capitol Hill. Human Life Action represents the Catholic bishops and our policy comes directly from the USCCB’s Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

Our goal is to **get everyone to act on email alerts** so that no one will ever again miss an opportunity to be a voice for the voiceless. Taking action costs only a minute of your time, yet the benefits are great. Human Life Action uses postal codes to match constituents to their federal elected officials to ensure that each message gets to the proper member of Congress. Please join us in defending a culture of life and liberty. Together we will be heard!

Suggestions in preparing for a Take Action Sunday

1. Secure permission from your pastor

Arrange a meeting with your pastor. You may need to do this months in advance in order to get Take Action Sunday on the parish calendar. It is important to respect the pastor's time, therefore be prepared in advance of the meeting and appreciative of his help after. Also, be sensitive to your pastor's concerns about legislative action by the Church. Be ready to explain that the e-mails are directed only toward influencing legislation and not toward electing or defeating any candidate. While the Church cannot and does not oppose or support candidates for elective office, we can and are called to be involved in advocacy on legislation.

Discuss the importance of this program with your pastor. Explain clearly what you are asking the pastor to help you do. The Introduction section above can help you put the request in context. Then seek permission to:

- Conduct a Take Action Sunday event which would include a pulpit announcement the weekend of the event.
- Place bulletin announcements before and after the event.
- Place information in the narthex and at exits of the church.
- Put a link on the parish website to www.HumanLifeAction.org.

2. Choose a method for parishioners to take action

Take Action Sunday can be conducted by either of two methods: electronically or on paper, or a combination of the two.

Method One: Electronic

The best and easiest way to conduct this take action drive is to do it electronically. This can be done after all Masses or during a parish event such as a Lenten soup supper or ministry fair. All you need is a team of volunteers equipped with smart phones and/or internet-capable tablets to be present at the information tables and exits. Parishioners can use the volunteers' or their own devices to sign up for Human Life Action alerts. By signing up for our alerts your community will find it easy to raise their voices in defense of life and liberty. When doing this at Mass:

- Station multiple volunteers at exits and in the narthex with internet-connected smart phones and tablets to help those who don't have their own devices. There should also be volunteers at every station handing out the take-away information.
- Be sure to have informational flyers available at the exits that people may take home should they wish to access our site at a later time and take action

from home. A printable version of this information is attached. Sign-up sheets may also be placed on tables at the exits.

Method Two: Paper

The second Take Action Sunday method is to provide sufficient sign-up sheets for each signing station so people can write their names and e-mail addresses without waiting for others. The lists can then be mailed to NCHLA: Human Life Action, P.O. Box 34116, Washington, DC 20043. (Human Life Action staff will input the addresses).

- In this case, parishioners should be directed to Take Action tables in the narthex or near each exit. In large parishes, you will likely need more than one table.
- Make your tables as attractive and visible as possible. You may want to hang banners about the tables. For example: "TAKE ACTION TODAY ON PRO-LIFE LEGISLATIVE E-MAIL ALERTS."
- In addition to tables, volunteers can circulate clipboards with pens. You may also want to have volunteers with phones, iPads, tablets, etc. available. This activity is especially good for involving youth!
- Remember: the less that people must do to find you or figure out how to sign up, the more successful your drive will be.

Please be sure to have information available at the exits that people may take home should they wish to access our site at a later time. A printable version of this information is attached.

3. Pulpit and bulletin announcements

PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT

Instructions: It is very important to read the pulpit announcement at every Mass on Take Action Sunday. If possible, the Parish Pro-Life Coordinator, or a designate, should carry out this task. Please adapt the wording of the announcement to fit the arrangements in your parish.

Text: Today we are urging everyone to take action on important pro-life legislation. E-mail alerts from Human Life Action enable the faithful to support the US Bishops' pro-life legislative goals. Human Life Action tracks federal legislation and then sends out calls to action which will go directly to your e-mail inbox. With a quick click you can become informed about the issue and send a message to your elected officials in Washington urging them to support laws that protect life and religious liberty.

Human Life Action is a service of NCHLA, which was founded in 1974 by the United States Bishops and works to support the pro-life legislative agenda of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Please take a moment to take action on the current alert. It will not require much time from you, but the impact of your voice, when joined with so many others from across the nation, will be enormous. Don't miss another opportunity to be a voice for the voiceless.

(Here insert explanation of the current action alert)

(Adjust this last part of the message according to your situation)

There are volunteers in the back and at the exits to assist everyone in engaging in responsible citizenship. You may also take an information flier to take action at home.

Thank you for your generosity in support of life and religious liberty!

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Week Before:

Coming Next Week: Human Life Action presents Take Action Sunday! Next Sunday our parish will conduct a Take Action Sunday on important pro-life legislation. You will have an opportunity to respond to a federal legislative action alert to protect human life and freedom of conscience. Please take action in support of life! You can do so at any time by visiting HumanLifeAction.org.

On the Day of the Event:

Today: Please stop on your way out of church to take action on important pro-life legislation. If you cannot stay a moment, be sure to take an informational flyer so you can take action at a more convenient time by visiting HumanLifeAction.org. Together we will be heard!

4. Network with key people. Contact other parish groups such as the youth group, young adult group, pro-life group and other committees within the Parish that will be willing to help with the take-action project.

* Be sure to advise the ushers of your activities and integrate their services into the effort as much as possible.

5. Materials needed: In addition to volunteers, be sure to have e-mail sign up forms, informational flyers, posters and “how to” instructions for those who sign up.

6. Thank the People Who Helped You: It is important to thank volunteers AND the priest who assisted in this effort. Thank you for taking the lead on this important action drive!