Building a Culture of Radical Welcome for Moms, Dads, and Babies at Catholic University

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On the façade of our campus's oldest building, Caldwell Hall, are the words of our university motto, De Mea [E], Gi t. These words remind us that \boldsymbol{L} i we are loved by God and that each one of us possesses incalculable worth, as the light of God shines in and through us. They recall something else as well: Illuminated by this divine light, we are called to let it "shine before others" (Mt. 5:16). Just south of University Mall, we find a bookend to the words Deus Lux Mea Est. There sits "Angels Unawares," a sculpture depicting 140 refugees on a skiff headed toward an uncertain future and hoping for a better life. This sculpture reminds us that the light we receive is also a gift we are called to give, especially to those facing challenging circumstances. By offering our love and support to those who need it, our actions testify to the dignity of all human life. The Catholic University of America is committed to making our university a community illuminated by the divine light, a place of radical welcome for all — especially those in need of our help. Today we focus on extending the hand of loving welcome to mothers in our community, no matter their circumstances: to children: and to fathers.

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Abortion is a tragedy. And as our nation has been reminded in recent months, it is also among the most difficult topics to grapplr TJETEMC /P ALang (en-US)/MCID 30 BDC BT12 0 0 12 54 117.8801

As in all things, then, Mary is our guide as we dedicate ourselves to better serving the families in our community. We recall especially the witness of Our Lady of Guadalupe, whom Pope Saint John Paul II named as patroness of the unborn and who gives name to this project. The story of Guadalupe tells of Mary's appearance in 1531 to a Mexican peasant, Juan Diego. In their encounter, she asked him to build a church dedicated to her on the Hill of Tepeyac, and as evidence of her appearance, she offered him fresh roses in the bitterness of winter. This miracle was a gift not only to Juan Diego and the people of Mexico, but to the whole world. The roses that bloomed in winter symbolize Mary's radical hospitality: even in a desolate season, she nurtures a new creation. Our task is to model her, to create an environment of care and support for all families — especially the most vulnerable — so that, like roses in winter, they may thrive and bring new life.

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On June 24, 2022, in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs* to return the question of the legality of abortion to the legislative process, former University President John Garvey announced an effort to look for ways in which Catholic University can better support families who are part of our University community.

The effort's objective is to create an environment of accompaniment and support on campus from new parenthood on, across all the challenges that arise in family life, for all Catholic University families — from our undergraduate and graduate students, to our faculty and staff, to those in the wider Catholic University community.

To do this work he convened a committee led by Jennie Bradley Lichter (Deputy General Counsel) and joined by Dr. Judi Biggs Garbuio (Vice President for Student Affairs), Matt McNally (Chief Human Resources Officer), Rev. Aquinas Guilbeau, O.P. (University Chaplain), and Elizabeth Kirk (Director of the Center for Law & the Human Person at the Columbus School of Law). The committee later added an undergraduate research intern, Larissa York '24, and an operations manager, Karen Rajnes of the Office of General Counsel. President Garvey asked the committee to report to the University community in October 2022, which is Respect Life Month. He immediately shared news of this effort with then-incoming President Dr. Peter

which abuts our campus and hosts our University liturgies. The stunning mosaic depiction of Our Lady in that chapel reminds us that Guadalupe is the only Marian apparition in which the Blessed Mother is visibly pregnant. By naming its effort the Guadalupe Project, the members of the committee invoked Our Lady's ongoing intercession for its work and kept her tender mother's heart front of mind in searching for ways to provide increased care for babies and their parents in our midst.

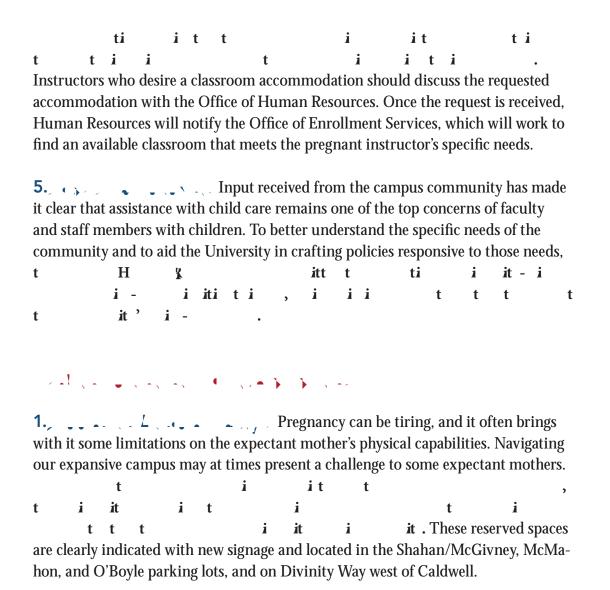
From its inception, the committee was oriented towards action. Its composition and small size were deliberately chosen in view of this purpose, and its members have devoted countless hours to the project since late June, with a regular weekly meeting

staff, and faculty. Our hope is that this suite of action items, taken together, will measurably improve the quality of life and peace of mind of the mothers and fathers in our community, and by extension, of their children as well.

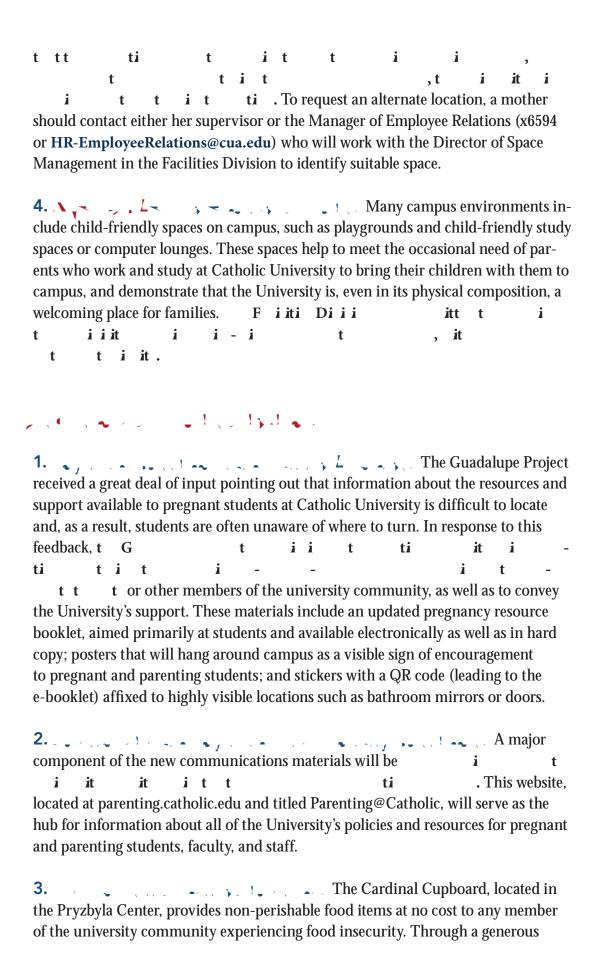
- Extend the maximum period of paid parental leave for eligible employees from 8 weeks to 12 weeks.
- Remove the waiting period for eligibility for paid parental leave. Full-time staff
 will now be eligible for paid parental leave immediately upon hire, with no
 waiting period.
- Allow parents who are both employed as staff by the University to use the maximum amount of individual paid parental leave available under the policy.

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2 The University provides 8 weeks of paid parental leave to eligible faculty members in which the faculty member is relieved of

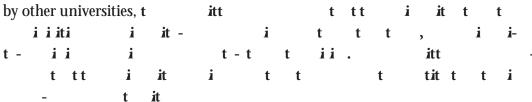


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University students who are single mothers with demonstrated financial need to live in one of its program residences.

The Guadalupe Project committee has identified several long-term opportunities to enhance the University's housing offerings for pregnant and parenting students. Based on input from the community and its study of housing opportunities offered by other universities.



At the heart of this effort is a desire to walk with — to accompany — pregnant and parenting students and colleagues, whether they are undergraduates discovering an unplanned pregnancy, graduate students starting a family at the same time as they begin their careers as scholars, or faculty and staff who are as committed to their own family lives as they are to their work at Catholic University. In order to accomplish this objective and truly become a place of radical welcome responsive to the needs of its community, the Guadalupe Project must have a permanent presence.

Finally, situated as it is within a university, t G t t t t t it t i . Scholars have a special task, according to Evangelium Vitae, to "place themselves at the service of a new culture of life by offering serious and well documented contributions, capable of commanding general respect and interest by reason of their merit."

(CH) tt C H it i t G t Εi itt i rzi , J.D., i itt for thinking about how core commitments of the Catholic intellectual tradition, including respect for the inviolability of all human life, ought to inform the study, teaching, and practice of law. For example, in the past year, CLHP hosted a number of conversations about the impact of the Dobbs decision, including a symposium on the role of infant adoption in women's decision-making in the case of an unexpected pregnancy. The CLHP will host a conference in spring 2023 on the centrality of the dignity of the human person to a proper understanding of justice.

The committee is grateful to the other faculty members and academic institutes and centers across the University that regularly engage with questions about human dignity, robust family policy, and other related matters from the perspective of a variety of disciplines. It recommends that the University continue to support and encourage this work.

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Before us lies an opportunity not only to protect but fully to embrace the sanctity of human life. It is a moment that calls first and foremost for love. Our task is to build a culture of radical hospitality here on our campus that will serve those among us

and illuminate the world around us. Our university motto, *Deus Lux Mea Est*, is a reminder not only of the divine gift of human dignity, but of the divine call to charity. We shine with the light of God so that others may see too. As we recommit

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Jennie Bradley Lichter, Chair Deputy General Counsel

Dr. Judi Biggs Garbuio Vice President for Student Affairs

Rev. Aquinas Guilbeau, O.P. *University Chaplain & Director of Campus Ministry*