



## CCCB NATIONAL PASTORAL INITIATIVE FOR LIFE AND FAMILY PREPARATORY YEAR 2012

### SUGGESTED HOMILY NOTES

#### **Easter: the Feast of Life**

The holy season of Easter — celebrating Christ's triumphant victory over death — provides an ideal opportunity for announcing the Gospel of Life. During this season we preach with all the conviction that the Gospel inspires, sending our people forth to bring the Easter victory of Christ to every segment of society!

- Easter is God's definite yes to life over death . . .
- Believers do not come to church at Easter simply to celebrate and remember the historical fact that Jesus rose from the dead. They come — as they do all Sundays — in order to “taste” this victory over death, this gift of new life.
- In rising, Christ, who *is* Life, not only destroyed His own death; He overturned the entire kingdom of death. Because the kingdom of death includes poverty, addiction, abortion, euthanasia and other offenses against human life and dignity, the victory of Easter includes the ultimate victory over these realities.
- Through His death and resurrection, Christ has established an everlasting kingdom of life, a kingdom where each and every human life is respected at every stage.
- Easter gives us our identity as a “people of life” and *for* life (*Evangelium Vitae* n.79). We are all baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus and called to walk with Him the path of holiness, promoting and defending life from conception to natural death and at every stage in between.
- In the paschal mystery, Jesus — who came “that we might have life and have it to the full” (John 10:10) — becomes our Eucharistic food so that, in union with Him, we can become the “food” that nourishes the life of our world. We first learn what this broken bread means through the lived experience of family life — through the example of our parents who demonstrate their self-giving love in the way they forgive each other after arguing, in how they attend to our every need even when it makes for sleepless nights, how they go out of their way to help their aging parents and in countless other ways.
- We live in the midst of a culture of death marked by a false understanding of human sexuality, by spiritual and material poverty, abortion, addiction and attempts to decriminalize assisted suicide and euthanasia. These realities invite us to become bearers of hope and to promote life time and again.

- Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Blessed John Paul II, has called us all to a New Evangelization. In the context of this New Evangelization, we are all called and EMPOWERED to be apostles of life. This is our call and our duty. The challenge is huge, but we are sustained by Christ who makes Himself freely present to us in the sacraments — who feeds us with His own Body and Life in the Eucharist — and who longs to work with and in us.
- Christ’s victory is a victory for today, because we share His risen life now. If we share His life, we are an “Easter people.” The Risen Christ calls us all to build a culture of life, to proclaim the victory of life, and take our stand against all the forces which threaten to eclipse the value of life. We can stand before these forces, declaring that they no longer have any power over us or any place in our midst. Christ is Risen!
- Together, we all sense our duty to preach the Gospel of life through our every day life, to celebrate it in the Liturgy, and to serve it with programs and structures which support and promote life at every stage (*Evangelium Vitae* 79). We must work to create a culture where every person is valued, where responsible human sexuality is encouraged, and where the needs of the poor, the sick, the elderly, the lonely and the dying are addressed in a spirit of solidarity. Christ empowers us to do just this! The only ability He is looking for is *availability*. Invite Him to work in you.
- We need not fear; the final outcome of the battle for life is already decided. Christ has already conquered sin and death!

**29 February 2012**