



NATIONAL PASTORAL INITIATIVE FOR LIFE AND THE FAMILY

Suggestions for Homilies and Prayers of the Faithful

“I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly.” ~John 10:10b

When Jesus reminds us that he came that we might have life, he does so in the context of laying down his own life for our sake. Defending life in our country and even in our faith communities can cause division, fear of judgment and limit our relations with others. Yet Jesus continues to offer abundant life to all, and invites us to be one with him in receiving, protecting and nurturing life.

Proclaiming the “Gospel of Life” is unavoidable if the Good News is to be incarnated in the lives of his disciples. Why not take up the challenge to include some element of the culture of life each Sunday in your parish, and whenever possible in your daily life? To be consistent with “the Gospel of Life”, we need to do it in a way that inspires unity, and dissipates fear and judgment. All of us, ordained and lay, are called to open others to the kind of relationships that make discipleship truly life-giving.

Each week, you will find here suggestions for a homily, a prayer of the faithful or an insight which can be used to foster the abundant life that Jesus came to bring us. These suggestions can also be easily adapted for family and personal prayer, or for presentations when participating with other groups or organizations. Every parish and each of us individually, are invited to make Christ’s life abundant, relevant and approachable for all.

June 4, 2017 – PENTECOST SUNDAY, Year A

Homily Idea: *Being spoken to in our own language fills us with life.*

If you’ve ever been in a place where no one speaks your language, you know what it feels like to be unable to communicate, to be confused when others try to speak to you, or to experience the frustration of being misunderstood. This feeling can allow us to appreciate just how personal is the miracle of the gift of tongues poured out on the disciples at Pentecost. Our God speaks all languages, and ours is a Church, 2000 years later, that is increasingly working to translate Bibles and the liturgy into as many indigenous languages as possible. Jesus came in human flesh so we could relate to Him. This is the gift of the Incarnation: God has eaten our food, learned and spoken human language, listened to our voices and heard our cries. It is our privilege as Church to learn to speak and hear the languages of the people who are part of our communities, and to reach out to a world that desperately needs to know God speaks their language.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the humility and courage to learn to speak the languages of all God’s people, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God who speaks all languages, help us to feel and appreciate the gift of language. Give us humility and courage to try to speak the languages of others, that all people might hear your truth in ways they can understand. Thank you for the gift of the Church. Amen. Alleluia.

June 11, 2017 – SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY, Year A

Homily Idea: God has chosen to make the life of the Father, Son, and Spirit oriented to our life.

From the time of Moses, God has been reaching out to heal us and give us life. Moses did not know the Father, the Son, and the Spirit by their names, but he knew to call on God for the gifts of healing and reconciliation. Jesus comes in humble glory to reveal to us the fullness of God's plan. It is a miracle full of wonder every time we contemplate that God, in three Persons, has chosen to orient His life to give us life. God chose to create us. God chose to give us freedom to love or reject Him and each other. God chose to send us His Son, and fill us with the Holy Spirit that we might live, now and into eternity. Today is a good day, because He lives and because we do.

Prayer of the Faithful: For wonder and awe at the gift of God's self to us, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God of life and love, thank you for the gift of yourself to us, for choosing to give us life and never leaving us alone. Help us to trust in you today and every day, and bring us safely into eternal life. Amen.

June 18, 2017 – SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (*Corpus Christi*), Year A

Homily Idea: *Spiritual life is always an embodied life, for Jesus and for us.*

Jesus' gift to us in the Eucharist is his whole self -- humanity and divinity, body and soul -- for the benefit of our whole bodies. By his Body and Blood, we physically eat and are nourished in both body and soul. In the Gospel, people are shocked by this embodied request of Jesus, but He is insistent. We need His Body and His Blood for eternal life. This is a lesson for us as we walk through our own lives and respond in love to the lives of others. We cannot care only for bodies -- by offering economic development or health care, without attention to spiritual accompaniment. Nor are we called to offer spiritual guidance without being attentive to people's physical needs. People are always and ever physical and spiritual, bodies and souls, and our ministry, care, outreach, and love must always treat whole persons. So, in your own life, how are you nurturing and growing as a whole person? This week, ask God to show you where you can strengthen your own practices of caring for your whole self, body and soul, so you can do the same for others.

Prayer of the Faithful: In thanksgiving for the Body and Blood of Jesus feeding our bodies and our souls, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Jesus, thank you for the gift of your Body and your Blood. Help us to receive the gift of yourself, continually offered to us in the Eucharist. By this gift, transform us into your Body, that we might care for others the way you have cared for us. Amen.

June 25, 2017 – 12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year A

Homily Idea: *Life is a gift God offers to us that He also allows us the freedom to refuse.*

So many of us go through life afraid of living, worried we aren't good enough to please God, or that we have messed things up too much to recover. The second reading reminds us that eternal life is a gift, freely given, and all we need to do is receive the gift of freedom Jesus offers us in grace. The Gospel affirms that we are free

to receive the gift, and with that freedom also comes the freedom to reject it. Though sin, evil, and darkness exist in the world because of freedom, no darkness can overcome the light of God, who will expose all darkness to light in His time. The possibility of hell and condemnation exists not because God desires to punish us, but rather because God so completely respects our freedom to choose death if we do not want the life He offers. Do not be afraid to choose life, to set down your sinfulness, and to let Him exchange it for peace, for joy, for love – and for true life in this world and the one to come.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the grace to choose and receive the life God offers us, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of life, take away our fear. Teach us to walk through the darkness, trusting in your light. Help us to know and believe how much you love and care for us. Amen.