



**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 3, 2018 – SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (*Corpus Christi*)

Homily Idea: *Jesus’ life in the body becomes our life in the body – through the Eucharist. We need to have reverence for our bodies.*

We live in a culture that treats the body like an object owned by a person. Christianity radically professes that body and soul together are a person: we are our bodies. This was always true. Then Jesus showed us why it matters: God is working out our salvation through Jesus’ life, death and bodily Resurrection, inviting us to follow Him. This means our salvation is connected to how we live in the body. So it matters spiritually how you live in and with your body, how you think about it, how you treat it, and that you reverence your body’s participation in God’s work. Think of one way you can improve your reverence for your body this week and practise. Go to bed on time. Eat food that nourishes you. Move. Speak about your body with respect and reverence. Serve someone else by mowing the lawn, carrying groceries, or giving a backrub. Soak aching muscles. Thank God for the gift of a body that is participating in your salvation.

Prayer of the Faithful: In thanksgiving for the gift of Jesus’ Body and Blood, and ours, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Jesus, Body and Blood, you offered yourself so completely that you nourish us with yourself, that we might live and die and rise again as we follow you. Help us to treat our bodies with reverence and respect. Teach us to let your Body and Blood dwell in ours. Amen.

JUNE 10, 2018 – 10TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *Faithfulness matters more than blood in the life of God's family.*

The last lines of the Gospel are pretty powerful reminders to us: "Who are my mother and my brothers?... Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." God is a God of constant invitation, One who offers purpose and mercy to all. And we are pretty fickle – even on our good days – in giving preference to those in our "own camp". It's beautiful that we work hard to love our own families and friends, but not if it is to the exclusion of others. God is asking us to expand our notion of family, to all those who seek goodness and love. Refugees, those struggling with poverty or addiction, people of different traditions and cultures – these too are God's family members, and He is asking us to love them as such.

Prayer of the Faithful: For hearts big enough to love all of God's family, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Lover of the human family, teach us to see every one of your children as your beloved, and ours. Expand our hearts to love all your people as our own. Break down the walls we put up, and erase the lines we draw between "them" and "us". May our lives be lived in accordance with your will, that we might be blessed to be a part of your family, on earth and in heaven. Amen.

JUNE 17, 2018 – 11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *We are the soil in which God plants the seeds of His kingdom. Our lives are to bear fruit.*

In two powerful stories about seeds, Jesus tries to help us understand the magnitude and mystery of God's Kingdom. In both cases, God brings forth life from something small, that has to die first in order to bear fruit which cannot be imagined by looking at the seed. Each of us is a field in which God is planting the seeds of His Kingdom – and He plans for us to bear fruit. We believe in the fruitfulness of God and our participation in it. This is why the Church insists that pregnancy and children are always gifts, even when bearing new life comes with tremendous challenges. But we do not limit this fruitfulness to biological reproduction, even while we reverence that reality. Those called to biological parenthood (now or in the future), as well as those not called to biological parenthood (now or in the future) are asked to bear the fruit of the Kingdom: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Is your life bearing this fruit? If not, what help and healing is God asking you to pursue?

Prayer of the Faithful: For the fruit of the Spirit to be borne in our lives, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of seeds, teach us to anticipate your Kingdom being birthed in our lives. Give us hearts that long to receive the seeds you plant, and lives that tend your growth with great care. May we cultivate the gifts of your Spirit, that our lives will offer much fruit in accordance with your will. Amen.

JUNE 24, 2018 – SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

Homily Idea: John's life pointed people constantly to Jesus. Does mine?

John the Baptist was a cousin of Jesus, conceived after years of infertility to an aging couple. When Elizabeth met Mary, John leaped in the womb to announce Jesus' coming. John -- living in the wilderness, eating strange food, saying things that made people uncomfortable. He began to baptize people for repentance to prepare

them to meet Jesus. John was strange and God used him to change lives. If God uses John, the strange cousin of Jesus, how valid are my excuses? It is easy to say we are too quiet, too fallen, too unworthy. But when we do so, we limit God's power to use all our quirks, our weaknesses, our gifts for His glory. When we follow Jesus, our lives can become a light for others to find Him. Who are we to tell God that we aren't up to it? Ask God to use you this week to let your life point to Jesus, and see what happens.

Prayer of the Faithful: For lives that point to Jesus, just like John the Baptist, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Saint John the Baptist, you found your purpose in pointing others to Jesus. Pray for us -- that we might live lives that do likewise; that we might set down our excuses and let God use us; that our lives might be a path towards the living God. Amen.
