



**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.

---

**April 3, 2016 – 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER, Year C (Divine Mercy Sunday)**

**Homily Idea:** *What are the signs of God’s new life in us?*

In the first reading, “many signs and wonders were done among the people” following the Resurrection of Jesus. People came because they saw others being changed. In the Gospel, Thomas insists on a sign. God gives him Jesus, even while reminding us that we are blessed to believe without proof. Still, signs are a part of our sacramental imagination in the Catholic Church. God works through stuff – most importantly, through the people created in His image. What signs are there of God’s new life in your life? Have you found healing in Jesus? Do you forgive more readily than you used to? How do you practise gratitude, celebrate the 50 days of Easter, signal to the world that Jesus is risen? What are the signs and wonders of His new life and yours? How will the people in your neighbourhood know Jesus has risen?

**Prayer of the Faithful:** For lives that are joyful signs of God’s new and risen life, we pray to the Lord.

**Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families:** Risen Jesus, make us signs of your Resurrection. Transform our suffering into joy. Make our gratitude for your gifts an invitation for others to see your blessings. Use our celebration of your new life as a witness to the new life you offer to everyone. Make us eager to be signs of your new and risen life. Amen.

---

## April 10, 2016 – 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER, Year C

**Homily Idea:** *New life will take us places we haven't gone in our old lives.*

Have you ever noticed that whatever you give Jesus, He will gratefully receive – and then He'll ask you for more? When we have died to our selfishness, our desires, and our bad habits during Lent, Easter is not a chance to pick them up again. Instead, the space we have created will allow God to ask something more of us. When Peter denied Jesus and then abandoned Him, Jesus helps Peter find new life by calling him to go deeper, in spite of himself. The more we grow, the more God will help us to grow. So when you feel yourself resisting the discomfort of new life, remember this discomfort is just the unfamiliarity of the Resurrection. It's still a surprise to us that new life follows death – resist the urge to settle back into the old, and lean in to the discomfort of something resurrected and made new.

**Prayer of the Faithful:** For the willingness to embrace the surprises and discomforts of new life, we pray to the Lord.

**Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families:** Resurrected Jesus, teach us the way of Resurrection. Help us resist the comforts we imagine in staying behind in older stages and places. Help us to walk bravely into the new life that has risen from the ashes of our suffering, frustration and challenges. There is a time for new beginnings, for starting over, for trying again. Keep our eyes focused forward on what awaits us here. Amen.

---

## April 17, 2016 – 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER, Year C

**Homily Idea:** *God's life is (also) for people who are not like you and whom you do not like.*

The controversy about Gentile Christians in the early Church can seem a bit removed from our contemporary reality. It was a big change for the chosen people to include people from different countries, ethnic backgrounds, language groups. We like to think we are well beyond such closed-mindedness, but many of our churches are filled with people much like us – same socio-economic status, neighbourhood, and sometimes even cultural or ethnic backgrounds. How would you feel on Sunday if one of your least favourite co-workers showed up in your pew next weekend? Would you be protective of a place where you belong, but others do not or should not? Whoever it is in your life that makes you uncomfortable – these are our contemporary Gentiles. God's life is for them too. Jesus is calling all of his people to hear His voice and recognize Him as their Shepherd. Will his people hear his voice through you? Even the people you struggle to love?

**Prayer of the Faithful:** For all of God's people to find a welcome home among us, we pray to the Lord.

**Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families:** Shepherd of all people, help us to see our prejudices. May we become aware of our limitations, our judgments and our hostilities, that all your people will find a welcoming home in our Church. Amen.

---

## April 24, 2016 – 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER, Year C

**Homily Idea:** *God's life is marked by love.*

Where is your life marked by the love of God? In what ways do others witness that love? If, after Jesus rises from the dead, the primary way that people encounter Him is through the way that our loving points to His, how

are we doing at being known by our love? This week, what three things could we do to proclaim our commitment to Jesus by showing love in ways others can see? Would we complain less and encourage more? Would we spend more time in service? Would we handle conflict with more patience and grace? Will they know us by our love?

**Prayer of the Faithful:** For lives marked by love that others can see, we pray to the Lord.

**Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families:** God of love, make our lives a witness to your love. May others know us by our love, and by that love may they be inspired to know and follow you too. Amen.

---