



## 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.

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**August 4, 2013 – 18<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year C**

**Homily Idea:** *Greed robs us and others of the life God intends for us.*

We live in a material world and a materialistic culture. There are many riches and blessings of God that are worth celebrating in the world, but we are easily tempted to consume and hoard them. This destroys them. Christ is in everything, but more of everything will not give us more Christ. Jesus’ life is found in the simple and the shared. Look at the Gospel through the Eucharist. We can try to hoard the Eucharist, resent those who receive it more often than we do, believe we are better than those who do not receive, demand that God give us the graces he gives to others – all this misses the abundant provision God pours out daily like manna in the desert. There is enough in today for each of us, if we will share what we have with all in need and trust that tomorrow will take care of itself. Where am I hoarding? What am I saving for tomorrow that God wants me to enjoy today? What have I denied to others out of selfish desire to have for myself?

**Prayer of the Faithful:** For generosity to replace our greed, we pray to the Lord.

**Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families:** Generous God, teach us to live simply, without excess and fear. May we be captivated by your provisions and formed in your abundant generosity.

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## August 11, 2013 – 19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year C

**Homily Idea:** *Shout that all are chosen: God is offering life in abundance to all people.*

These readings are marked by the humanity of God's people, and contrasted by God who is revealed in them. We desire deeply to be God's chosen people, and have mistakenly assumed there must also be those who are not chosen. It is a human way to tell the story, dividing the world into us and them – but God reveals all are chosen. The more aware we become that God has chosen us, the more we desire for others to hear God calling all others too. The fact all are chosen is not a licence for apathy, but for attentiveness to the God who is always coming. For those of us who know the riches of faith, much will be asked. Even as we reach out to love a world that is often hurting, we do so with faith: "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

**Prayer of the Faithful:** For a desire to offer abundant life to all God's chosen people, we pray to the Lord.

**Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families:** God who chooses us all, break down the barriers we have put up. Help us to see you in all people. Draw us willingly into the vulnerability that invites others to see you in us. Amen.

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## August 18, 2013 – 20TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year C

**Homily Idea:** *Living in God will bring us to the cross – with joy.*

This week's Gospel is not easy to hear. It is certainly not intended to give us permission to be satisfied with painful divisions in our families, communities and world. It is, however, Jesus' affirmation that living out the mission of God will bring us face to face with conflict, fire, and even violent reactions. Jeremiah is set outside the city to starve; Jesus is put to death. Christian life will make demands of us -- how we spend our money, the way we speak to someone who is misbehaving, the call to forgiveness .... The second reading reminds us to connect our sacrifices to Jesus' patient endurance on the cross. We may well be misunderstood or hated, but living the dying will allow us also to live the resurrection – and we can do it all with willing trust and joy.

**Prayer of the Faithful:** For joyful faithfulness to God's mission, and a heart to love those who hate us, we pray to the Lord.

**Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families:** God of fire, kindle in us a heart for your mission. Make us bold as we speak your truth. Give us hearts to love those who are threatened, or afraid of the cost of loving you. Fill us with compassion, and mark us with your peace, now and forever. Amen.

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## August 25, 2013 – 21TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year C

**Homily Idea:** *Let your life proclaim the good news of Jesus.*

It can be tempting to let these readings fill us with fear that we will never measure up, or push us toward a smug and self-righteous judgement of others. Neither is in keeping with the spirit of the readings as a whole; the Psalm today is the key: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news." This life God calls us to is narrow and disciplined. It requires effort, humility and sacrifice, and this is *good news*. So if we want to defend and protect life, and we want others to draw near to the God of life, we can start by living God's discipline in our own lives, and delight in the ways he is transforming us and his world.

**Prayer of the Faithful:** For the courage to let our lives proclaim the goodness of Jesus, we pray to the Lord.

**Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families:** God, Father of all earth's children, draw us into your loving arms. Help us to receive your discipline, boundaries and sacrifices without resistance, that our lives might bear joyful witness to your goodness. Amen.

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