



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 2, 2013 – SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST, Year C

Homily Idea: *Reverencing life in the body.*

Our God is the God who makes ordinary things holy. A wedding becomes a miracle. Mud becomes medicine. The human body and blood of Jesus become our salvation. In the Gospel reading, Jesus shows his reverence for the body by responding to human hunger. We proclaim the dignity of every human being from conception to natural death. This gives us a myriad of occasions to reverence the miracle of our spiritual journey that takes place in and through life in the body. From the beginning of life to its end, we are called to feed the hungry, visit and care for the sick, share what we’ve been given, ensure everyone has meaningful work, and take care of our bodies.

Prayer of the Faithful: For eyes to see God present in the body and blood of his people, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Jesus, our Brother, you have known our flesh and our blood, and by it you have won for us salvation. May we see you in our own bodies and offer ourselves to you, that our lives may bear witness to the miracle of life in the body. Amen.

June 9, 2013 – 10TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year C

Homily Idea: *Resurrection is the sign of God's life.*

In the first reading and the Gospel, people are brought back to life from the brink of death. In both these texts, the miracle is a sign of God's presence in a great prophet and teacher. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, however, our resurrection becomes as sure as the death we will all face. Christians are witnesses to the resurrection. It is our job to see and proclaim the resurrection of Jesus. Every spring, we see the resurrection of life after death. In the midst of illness, we can see the gift of care, service and growth. After sin, we often experience the new life of conversion, repentance and forgiveness. Resurrection is a sign of God's life. It is our job to bear witness to it, that others might come to believe.

Prayer of the Faithful: For faith in the ongoing resurrection that God is carrying out in our world, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of the Living, increase our faith in the resurrection. Help us to see your ongoing resurrection at work in the world, and make us compelling witnesses to the new life you offer us in Jesus. Amen.

June 16, 2013 – 11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year C

Homily Idea: *Gratitude is the life-giving response to God's mercy.*

It is unsettling for the diners gathered when the sinful woman in the Gospel anoints Jesus. With great love, the woman pours out her response to God's mercy, and this act is both a sign and source of healing. With Nathan's help, David also seeks repentance for murder. How often do we withhold forgiveness, long after God has offered it? How often do we refuse those who have received God's forgiveness the outward expressions of gratitude and full inclusion in our communities? If we really understand what God has done and continues to do for us, we would be anointing feet and writing songs of praise. What are our expressions of gratitude in response to God's mercy and forgiveness? How are we sharing those expressions with others?

Prayer of the Faithful: For gratitude to overwhelm us as a response to God's generosity, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Father of mercy, fill us with gratitude for the gifts you pour out on us. We have neither earned nor expected your grace but have received it anyway. Remove our fear of showing gratitude for all you have offered us, so that our thanksgiving might inspire gratitude in others. Amen.

June 23, 2013 – 12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year C

Homily Idea: *What we cling to will die.*

Jesus finishes the Gospel today saying we must be prepared to lose our lives for his sake, if we want to live. But perhaps more compelling to the Gospel of life, is that if we cling to life we will lose it. What are we clinging to that robs us of life and brings us closer to death? Is it money or power? A role or position we hold? Are we clinging to unhealthy relationships or dysfunctional behaviour? The life God offers us in Jesus has to be held with open hands, allowing every joy and challenge to come *and to go*. What we cling to will die, and we will lose that very thing we are asked to let go of in order to live.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the courage to release our grip on the things that rob us of life, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of abundant life, show us where we are clinging like slaves to our chains. Set us free, Open our hands and hearts both to receive and to let go of all that life offers us. Amen.

June 30, 2013 – 13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year C

Homily Idea: *Slavery destroys life, but we seem to seek it out.*

The letter to the Galatians warns the early Christians against giving up their newfound freedom by being enslaved by their own desires. We are only to submit ourselves to the yoke of love. God asks something of us, yet we say, "I would say yes, but...." That is a sign we have given our freedom away to someone who is not God. It is a sign we have become enslaved. We are called to reject slavery anywhere we find it; however, its most devious forms are the ones we justify in our own lives. We can find ourselves slaves to our jobs, to dysfunctional relationships, to shame, to fear, and to grudges. Christ has unlocked our handcuffs and opened the prison doors. If we are still enslaved, it is because we have refused to walk into freedom. In the Gospel, Jesus invites people to freedom. Some receive it; many more choose to stay enslaved. The disciples want to punish those who reject the message, but Jesus rebukes them. We can choose slavery, but we are called beyond it to life.

Prayer of the Faithful: For courage to receive freedom and reject slavery, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of freedom, soften our hearts to you and give us courage to bear witness to the freedom of being bound to you. Draw us into a life of following you, and give us the grace to go where you lead us without reservation or fear. Amen.
