



**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 7, 2015 – SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (Corpus Christi)

Homily Idea: *Blood becomes a sign of life, instead of death, in Jesus.*

In almost every culture in the world, violence is glorified – even if only as a necessary evil. Many religious traditions have a history of blood sacrifice, of animals and in some cases of people. Recognizing that we fail so completely to live up to the moral standard written on our hearts, death or its substitute has been a nearly universally understood consequence for sin. These readings show us a history that changes our symbolic understanding of blood. Jesus takes on the sin of the world and willingly dies – not to appease an angry God once and for all – but to bear witness to the victory of life over death. Blood becomes a sign of the life God intends for us all. When we eat Christ’s Body and drink His Blood, we reject blood offerings and choose to receive God’s mercy; our lives become an offering of grace, and our blood a sign of His abundant life poured out for us all.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the blood of all people to bear witness to peace, life and abundant mercy instead of death, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Jesus, Body and Blood, nourish us by your life. May the way we live as your Body on earth let us participate in your feeding the hungry of our world. May our very bodies and our blood bear witness to the life you desire for all your people. Amen.

June 14, 2015 – 11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *There is no situation out of which God cannot bring new life.*

So often, Christians have a reputation for being judgemental, for labeling situations and even people, and then writing them off. Whether we actually behave that way, or are simply perceived to, it's a problem. We worship God who made a great nation out of a tiny tribe, whose Kingdom is a miracle like a mustard seed, who came in a stable to be King. There is no situation God cannot restore. It is our privilege and our calling to earn a reputation as recklessly hope-filled, preaching the possibility of new life into the darkest corners of our world. Addicted? Afraid? Broken? Abused? Angry? Lonely? Depressed? Sick? Imprisoned? It's all the stuff of new life, if we will walk with Him and his people in the darkest, most difficult places without judgement.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the courage to go to the darkest corners of our world and proclaim there is hope, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of mustard seeds, show us the beauty and potential in the small and difficult. Give us Resurrection eyes, and courage to walk through darkness, searching for light. Help us refrain from judging people so we can love them as you do, exactly where they are. In the midst of the hells we have created and to which we cling in desperation, help us be bearers of the joy and freedom of heaven. Amen.

June 21, 2015 – 12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: Humility allows us to see the extraordinary in ordinary life.

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" God's words to Job are such good medicine for us. So often we resist and fight the circumstances of our lives, blocking grace where we are because we are too busy wishing for God to show up in another way. In the midst of the storm, the disciples wake a sleeping Jesus, accusing Him of not caring they will die. Of course, Jesus calms the storm and they are in awe that nature obeys Him. It is interesting His words to the weather also apply to our hearts: "Peace! Be still!" If, in the midst of whatever crisis is shaking our faith this week, we can stop and root ourselves in the presence of Jesus in our present circumstances, exactly as they are, we too can find peace in Christ. This is how Paul can say everything God has touched is a new creation. We don't need to be anywhere other than where we are. Here, with humility, He can pour out grace in the ordinary.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the humility to see Jesus in the ordinary, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Creator and King, your ways are not our ways. Teach us to call for your peace and stillness in our storms, to trust the way you bring calm out of chaos. Amen.

June 28, 2015 – 13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *We were made for life, for sharing life, for eternal life.*

It is such a consolation to read in the first reading that we not made for death, that God grieves, rather than delights in, the death of creation. We are made for living, for existing, for growth here and into eternity. And that life is not for its own sake, as Paul reminds the Corinthians, but for sharing with all of God's creation. We are made for life, and our life is deeper and richer when none are deprived by our living. (In fact, we lose our own lives when we deprive life to others.) The first two readings are the theological foundation for the Gospel. When

a woman has been bleeding for 12 years, sent to the fringes of her community by her illness, Jesus desires to heal her, to give her fullness of life. He does this on the way to raise a young girl from the dead. He will not prevent us from suffering or death, but He always offers us a way through it, to transform our dying into life. Where are we clinging to death, preserving our own life at the expense of others? We need not be afraid.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the desire to experience God's new life and a willingness to be healed and transformed, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Living God, fill us with gratitude for the gift of life itself. Help us avoid clinging to the gifts you so freely give. Make us generous, so that the way we live will offer more life to others. Help us desire the gifts of eternal life here and now, as well as in the world to come. Amen.
