



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.

May 5, 2013 – SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, Year C

Homily Idea: *Peace be with you.*

There is nothing like conflict and violence to rob us of our life. Conflict, misunderstanding, tension, disagreement and even violence were present in the life of the early Church, and continue with us today. Yet Jesus says to his disciples, “Peace be with you.” In the midst of a broken world, God offers us peace. Should we choose to receive it and discipline ourselves to abide in it, we have much to offer to those around us. Today, at home, at work, in our families and communities, we can choose the way of peace. We can only choose it for ourselves, but by choosing it for ourselves, we can invite others to do likewise.

Prayer of the Faithful: For peace to reign in even the most violent parts of the world, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of peace, grant us the still calm and quiet that comes from trusting in you. When everything is chaos, give us the grace to hold on to your still, small voice, that we might find the courage to bring a peaceful calm into the storm.

May 12, 2013 – SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD, Year C

Homily Idea: *Jesus leaves us that we might find him – in each other.*

God is life itself: the current of a beating heart, the whisper of breath, the surrender of death. When Jesus ascends into heaven, his followers are afraid they will be alone. But Jesus must leave them if they (and we) are to find him among us. While his disciples cling to him and we cling to our loved ones, Jesus reminds us all that we need to love each other into the life that awaits us in God. Jesus' death and Ascension remind us that God is present to us in life and beyond it.

Prayer of the Faithful: For eyes to see God's life in his people, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Giver of Life, help us to see your life at work in our lives. Keep us from clinging to what is today, that we might receive the gifts of life that await us tomorrow. Amen.

For other possible options for the Ascension, see the Optional Resources for Liturgies and Prayer which have been suggested for the **National Week for Life and the Family, May 12-19**, Part IV, at http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/life_and_family/2013_Week_for_Life_and_Family_-_Resources_for_liturgy_and_prayer.pdf

May 19, 2013 – PENTECOST SUNDAY, Year C

Homily Idea: *Our fearful excuses deprive us and others of Life.*

When the Spirit descends on the disciples in the upper room, they burst forth, proclaiming the good news in every language. No one will be deprived of the good news. No illness, no culture gap, no sinfulness – nothing stands in the way of hearing the Word, who is Jesus. How often are we standing in the way of the Spirit who is trying to proclaim the good news? “I’d give money to that beggar, but she’ll just spend it on drugs.” “I’d offer forgiveness, but he raped someone I love.” “I’d tell you about Jesus, but you and I don’t speak the same language – or maybe we do, but you wouldn’t understand.” Our excuses get in the way and keep us from truly living the life that God offers us. These excuses are fears that keep us locked in the upper room. Let the fire of the Holy Spirit touch you, rest on you, burn away the excuses, and send you forth!

Prayer of the Faithful: For the fire of the Spirit to burn away our fear and drive us into life, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Father of mercy, bring us face to face with our own weakness when we are tempted to judge others. May we find peace and life in allowing you to be the merciful judge of us all.

For other possible options for Pentecost, see the Optional Resources for Liturgies and Prayer which have been suggested for the **National Week for Life and the Family, May 12-19**, Part V, at http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/life_and_family/2013_Week_for_Life_and_Family_-_Resources_for_liturgy_and_prayer.pdf

May 26, 2013 – SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY, Year C

Homily Idea: *Life and love are a mystery to be drawn into.*

Just as we never fully understand the mystery of the Trinity, we also fail to understand the mystery of life. Sometimes, we need to stop trying to figure it out and let ourselves be captivated by the mystery. From the very beginning, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have lived in relationship with one another. By the generosity of God, Three in One, we are invited into that relationship of love – rather than simply asked to try to understand it. God's mystery of life and love begins in the relationship of love in the Trinity and spills over among us. Let our hearts and minds be captivated by caring for and rejoicing in the good of others, of each and every human life, and for all creation.

Prayer of the Faithful: With gratitude that we have been invited into the mystery of God's very life, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, animate our living. Help us to forget ourselves, to get caught up in the mystery of your love and life. Let us never forget the need to care for the good of others. Never let us take for granted the mystery of life.

For other possible options for Trinity Sunday, see the Optional Resources for Liturgies and Prayer which have been suggested for the **National Week for Life and the Family, May 12-19**, Part VI, at http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/life_and_family/2013_Week_for_Life_and_Family_-_Resources_for_liturgy_and_prayer.pdf
