



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.

November 3, 31ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

Homily Idea: *Love what is in life, as God loves it.*

The world as it is right now is utterly lovable. Nothing, no sinful thing, no broken person, no problem or challenge can render any part of life unlovable. The readings this week demonstrate how God loves what He made, creating space to transform death into life by abundant love. Notice that these readings don’t say that what is right now is perfect -- just that what is right now in my life (and the lives of others) is lovable. From here, Wisdom says, God can correct us little by little. The second reading suggests that prayers can open us to God. The Gospel reminds us that even the most sinful among us can be found by God who loves us, even while we are lost. The life God has for us can come from where we are now. We are asked only to trust that God is loving us and others, and to follow his example of loving deeply the life and lives in front of us. When someone challenges and irritates you, love them as they are. Be grateful for them and pray for them. When you wish things were different, thank God for what is. Grow into accepting and loving what is.

Prayer of the Faithful: For a deep love for what life is right now, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Families, Bulletins or Small Groups: Seeker of the lost, you have loved us as we are in each and every moment of our lives. Teach us to love what is, so as to trust in your love, that we might experience the free and generous gift of your grace, transforming into what will be. Amen.

November 10, 32ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year C

Homily Idea: *Life is the present gift and future reward of the faithful.*

We are not only practising our faith in hope of eternal life. Living faithfully transforms the suffering and joys of this world into heaven on earth -- today. The brothers in the first reading are not abandoned by God, but given new life in Him, sure that their present and eternal lives are the same reality. The Gospel demonstrates this by detachment. Those who question Jesus are seeing marriage only with eyes for life on earth, assuming that marriage will be extended to heaven in the same form. Christian marriage has eternal purpose because it transforms us and the world into people changed by God. The gifts of marriage in this life (greater capacity for love, children, selflessness, faithfulness, sacrifice) are exactly the gifts we inherit in eternal life. So live well now, and into eternity.

Prayer of the Faithful: For hopeful trust that this life, lived well, will lead us faithfully into eternal life, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Families, Bulletins or Small Groups: Jesus of life on this earth, help us to trust that you are the way to eternal life. Give us conviction that our following your example in our daily lives will be the road to the eternal life you promised us. Amen.

November 17, 33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

Homily Idea: *Life lies in being faithful to the task at hand.*

This week's readings offer a temptation to preach fire and brimstone, or of earning one's way to heaven. Both of these have the same trap: most of us fall short of living up to faithfulness and deserve the fire. The life God desires for us is found in living as faithfully as we can in every circumstance, challenging and beautiful, peaceful and suffering, standing firm or falling down. The first reading offers us a key in the final line: the sun of justice will rise with healing rays. We can keep struggling to live faithfully, trusting in God's time and mercy, for us and for others. When someone we love is facing addiction, poverty, the breakdown of relationship, we can love them, pray for them, bring soup, offer our wisdom and counsel as invited, respect the freedom God has given them to have the final say in their own life choices, and do the next things that lie before us. We can keep living through the present moment.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the courage to be faithful to the task that lies before us, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Families, Bulletins or Small Groups: God of justice, place us in your tender hands and heart. Help us to be faithful when we are afraid, disciplined when we feel aimless, attentive when we are tired. When we fall, help us to trust in your mercy, and to turn again to you and to the life you promised. Heal us with your justice, we pray, forever and ever. Amen.

November 24, SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING, Year C

Homily Idea: *The King of Life is Flesh and Blood.*

Life is holy, all of it, every moment, sacred and full of grace. We know this not because everything is God, but because Jesus becomes flesh and blood to reconcile the world to God. It has been a temptation of every generation of the world to make gods of the things of creation, but they always fail us, ending in death. We need

only one God, one King -- Jesus. Jesus transforms everything so that each moment of our lives in flesh and blood point us to God. This week, which ends our Church year, is a chance to ask before Advent, "Is Jesus the King of my life? Am I finding Him in the moments of my life, in my work and my home, in my chores and my rest?" Because in Him, I will find the meaning and purpose of my life.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the flesh and blood of Jesus to change our lives, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Families, Bulletins or Small Groups: Jesus, King of flesh and blood, teach us what it means to be human, to find divine life in our own lives of flesh and blood. Help us to see you, to be moved by you, to give our lives to the only King worthy of them, for you are Lord. Amen.
