



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 6, 2016 – 32ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

Homily Idea: *When we live for eternity, eternal life starts now.*

It is a difficult thing to know the God of eternity and then to live our lives in this time and place, to face suffering and the confusion of not knowing all of the mystery. In Maccabees, we see the conviction of the martyrs, who miraculously come to believe in the resurrection even before the coming of Jesus. In Paul’s letter, we see the early Christians making a move from believing that Jesus is returning imminently to a more prolonged trust that God will direct us for as long as we live. In the Gospel, the Sadducees wrestle with how eternal life will be both a continuation of and a break from reality as we know it. It’s kind of mindboggling. Here’s what we know: when we choose life in God now, our eternal life begins. Even when we face suffering, even when evil surrounds us, God is working out heaven on earth, and we can be a part of it with “every good work and word”. Love is the answer, on earth and in heaven, and we do not need to worry.

Prayer of the Faithful: For faithfulness in living heaven on earth in our daily lives, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of heaven and earth, remind us we do not need to wait until we die to experience the joy of heaven. With one loving action at a time, teach us to practise the love that builds heaven on earth, here and now, especially when it is hard. Amen.

NOVEMBER 13, 2016 – 33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

Homily Idea: *Now is the time to live faithfully.*

Jesus' first disciples believed he would return in their lifetime. At the end of every liturgical year, we get these beautiful end-of-times readings: "Be on your guard; the time is near; you do not know how much time you have!" Faith and love are easy in the honeymoon period of any relationship, when we are eager and love is new and fresh. Faith and love get harder when time passes and we take one another for granted, in friendships, marriages, communities, and churches. The message for the 11th hour in this week's readings, as the Church year draws to a close and we get closer to the darkest day of the year, is this: do the next loving thing with every ounce of energy you have. And then do the next loving thing. It is enough, and it is essential.

Prayer of the Faithful: For energy, when we have grown tired, to do the next loving thing, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of all time, you have loved your people throughout history, in all seasons and times. In the fullness of time, you sent Jesus to show us how to love, and you have promised to send Him again. As we grow weary and the days are long, help us be faithful. Remind us to do the next right and loving thing, time after time, until you come again in glory. Amen.

NOVEMBER 20, 2016 – SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING

Homily Idea: *In Christ, all of us have been called and chosen to live and to invite others to life.*

Christ the King Sunday is a feast to celebrate the greatness of Jesus, his upside-down and unanticipated Kingship of infancy, crucifixion and resurrection. It is also about how his royalty is our royalty. David is called out of the fields, out from under his older brothers, chosen and called to lead his people. Jesus has "enabled *you* to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light." It is so interesting that the Gospel passage is about the man hanging on the cross next to Jesus. This image blows away all our excuses: "Surely not me. I'm too quiet, too ordinary, too broken, too sinful, too tired." If the man on the cross next to Jesus will share in His Kingdom, then I do too. When I do, it is my job to extend that Kingship and new life to everyone I meet.

Prayer of the Faithful: For a willingness to be a part of Christ's Kingship and mission, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Christ, our King, and our Brother, you have chosen us to be your people in a Kingdom where all are welcome and all are called. Make our lives a participation in your mission to bring love and salvation to the whole world. Amen.

NOVEMBER 27, 2016 – 1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR A

Homily Idea: *The beginning of life is powerful and unsettling.*

We've just walked through the great threshold of one year closing and another beginning. We walk, with Advent, out of the tired ache of waiting for the end of time and into the equally disturbing and unsettling anticipation of the birth of Jesus, the embryonic phase of knowing life will never be the same but not yet knowing how. Vigilance is the prescription at both the beginning and the end, but the spirit has changed. Just as a pregnant mother gets serious about sleep and exercise, eating well and being ever more aware of this tiny person growing inside her, Advent is a time for us to be aware of the power of the Christ who wants to grow in each of us before being birthed from us into the world. This season of Advent can be powerful and unsettling if we let

these next weeks transform our lives. In the midst of the parties, preparing and planning, settle into the power of anticipation, the peace that will come from being unsettled, from making space in your home and your life for Jesus and for His people. New life is coming, for Jesus, and for you.

Prayer of the Faithful: For purpose-filled preparation during Advent that will unsettle us with new life, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Son of Man, coming unexpectedly into Mary and Joseph's life and ours, show up in our Advent preparations. Meet us in the busy-ness and the silence. Interrupt our comfortable lives with your newness of life. Prepare us to be unsettled by the unconditional love of God who is born in our lives, over and over again. Amen.
