



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. Being “pro-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? But 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 pro-life homily idea, a prayer of the faithful or an insight which can be used to foster the abundant life that Jesus came to bring to 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 4, 2012 – 31 ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *How well are we loving the least of God’s people?*

When Jesus says there are two greatest commandments (loving God and then loving our neighbour), he insists that the way we love each other is a key way in which we love him. Put another way on another occasion, Jesus said whatever we do to the least of our brothers and sisters, we do to him. When we stand before God to make an account of our lives as pro-life people, we will not only be asked if we prevented people from dying. We will also be asked how well we nurtured and cared for the quality of life of the least among us. How often do we sacrifice from our own need to share with the hungry? How are we doing in extending compassion to those in prison? Are we irritated or moved by the homeless?

Prayer of the Faithful: For deeper compassion and love for the hungry, the weak, the broken and the least of our brothers and sisters, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of the poorest and the least, open our hearts to hear the cries of the poor. As we see you in the weak and the broken, may we learn to love the weakness in ourselves. May we learn to love you by the way we love each other, we pray to the Lord.

November 11, 2012 – 32 ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *All of us is all God asks of us.*

In both the first reading and the Gospel, we meet an unexpected example of the kind of faith God calls us to – in a Gentile and a widow. In both these cases, someone weak and on the outside bears witness to giving everything we have to God in faith. Pro-life ministry often takes all we have and we rarely see the momentous change we hope for. God calls us to pour ourselves out with joy and trust in him. Everything we've got is all God asks of his disciples, no matter how small our offering seems to be in the great work of building the Kingdom.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the desire to give all that we are and all we have as an offering to God, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of miracles, open our hearts to give you everything we have, large and small. Take our offerings and transform what we have and who we are into the building blocks of your Kingdom.

November 18, 2012 – 33 ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *Forgiveness is essential to God's life.*

The second reading from Hebrews compares the human priesthood with the priesthood of Jesus. Human priests fail and turn back to God, requiring repetitive sacrifice. Jesus differs because he offers himself as a perfect sacrifice once for all. The last sentence of the reading is the key: where God has forgiven, sacrifice is not necessary. Unwillingness to forgive destroys life – for us and for others. If we are demanding that people earn back our confidence, we have failed to forgive. We need to be mindful that when we fail to forgive, we reject the one amazing and effective sacrifice of Jesus, as we are reminded in the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Prayer of the Faithful: For the grace to forgive others as we are forgiven, and for the new life that comes from being a people of forgiveness, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of mercy, show us the ways your forgiveness has freed us from the slavery of jealousy, fear, hatred and anger. Soften our hearts to receive the one perfect sacrifice of your Son, that we might offer the freedom of Jesus to others by our forgiveness and mercy.

November 25, 2012 – 30 ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *The King of Life will go to the cross.*

Jesus and Pilate find themselves face to face by the circumstances of life. Both are asked to have great courage in the face of great pressure: Pilate seeks the truth but fears the consequences of following it, while Jesus speaks the truth and by it faces his own death. Jesus, who is our King and the King of Life, is sentenced to death, but he transforms his execution into salvation for us all by rising from the dead. By his victory over death, he proclaims that we are made for living and protecting life. Wherever people are being sentenced to death or executed, government leaders, those who carry out executions, witnesses, citizens and prisoners are damaged by participating in the death of another human being. May the King of Life, by his death and resurrection, bring life for all people in every time, place and circumstance.

Prayer of the Faithful: For those who are responsible for sentencing and for those whose sentences are robbing them of their very lives, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Author of Life, give us reverence for your promise that you will be the ultimate Judge. Suspend our desire for vengeance, and fill us with gratitude for life itself and for your constant hope in our redemption. Be with those who render judgements and those who receive them, that all may know your call to abundant life.
