



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.

October 7, 2012 – 27th Ordinary Time – Year B

Homily Idea: *In each person God brings to us, we encounter bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.*

Each and every time we encounter another human being, God invites us to exclaim with joy, “At last, this is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh!” (Genesis 2, 23) In light of the long form of the Gospel this week, invite your parishioners to see the first opportunity they have to do this for others is in the womb, in celebrating the gift of a baby, from the very first moments of its conception. This is most prophetic when a baby is not planned, and is an unexpected surprise. To welcome the stranger, the one who is poor, the one who by their very existence demands more of us than we think. We have to give. This is the mark of a culture of life. When we speak out against abortion and poverty, and back those words with actions that make it possible to choose abundant life, only then can we really see how powerful it is that Jesus calls us brothers and sisters.

Prayer of the Faithful: For eyes to see God in each person we meet, and courage to protect and nurture life in the womb and beyond it, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Author of All Life, may we see your image in every person we encounter. May we be moved to protect the most vulnerable among us, in the womb and beyond it, that we may receive your gifts in the lives of your people, we pray to the Lord.

October 14, 2012 – 28 ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *I have to let go of my own life to find God's life.*

Being pro-life is not an easy thing to say in our culture, in part because taking a stand for God's life requires us to let go of our own lives. The rich young man is like so many of us (in the Church and outside it). We, like him, are mostly good people. But will we let go of our very lives to have God's life? Challenge your parishioners to imagine letting go of whatever is most important to them – family, meaningful work, health, control. Then challenge them to imagine that this is what we ask people to do when we ask them to give birth to unplanned babies, to stop buying from countries and companies that employ children, or to suffer through dying instead of killing themselves. God is asking for our whole lives. We all have more work to do in giving our whole lives over to God.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the strength to give our whole lives to God, that we might gain God's life, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of wisdom, show us how the life you have in store for us is more valuable than the lives we cling to. Help us to faithfully let go of all that we have, that our hands and hands will be empty and open to the life you long to fill us with.

October 21, 2012 – 29 ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *Competition robs us of true life.*

How often do we buy into the idea that we are competing with other people for God's favour? In the Gospel, James and John want to know that their being loved by God means that others are loved less. The first and second readings demand that we see how suffering, which we often count as the loss of God's favour, is actually the route to true life – both for ourselves and for others. The second reading reminds us that we are not in a competition. People who long for true life have to stop competing for love and call on God boldly for mercy and love, freely available to all who ask for it. Invite your parishioners to consider where they are competing to earn God's favour over others, instead of sharing in God's joy that we are all beloved children.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the courage to stop competing for God's favour, and the humility to suffer for the blessing of others, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of generosity, strip us of the jealousy and fear that has us competing for your love. Help us to transform our struggles into a love like yours, that celebrates each and every life, we pray to the Lord.

October 28, 2012 – 30 ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *Mercy is an essential part of God's life.*

The first reading and the Gospel remind us that our God is a God of mercy, but that being merciful usually costs us something – letting go of our pride, going back for those we have ignored, or stepping away from glory or praise. Furthermore, having mercy on others flows from our own need of mercy, as we read in the second reading. In addition to proclaiming the dignity of every human life, how do we as Church proclaim God's mercy? Encourage your parishioners to think about how our pro-life convictions are strengthened by being people of mercy and forgiveness.

Prayer of the Faithful: In gratitude for the gift of God's mercy in our lives and his invitation to share his mercy with others, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Merciful Father, show us where we have received your mercy, that we might share that mercy with others and offer them the new life of a new beginning.
