



**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.

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**November 5, 2017 – 31<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year A**

**Homily Idea:** *God’s laws give us life because He gave us His life. Do we offer ourselves to others?*

This week’s readings are an examination of conscience for those of us with deep religious conviction and practice. The Pharisees have a hard time, in the Gospels and generations before, in seeing God’s laws as a gift of God’s self instead of just a rulebook. The first reading and the Gospel are invitations to humility – do not lay expectations on others without helping them to carry their burdens! But perhaps the most convincing is Paul’s letter. Not only did he and his fellow teachers offer the Thessalonians the Gospel – the message of God’s call to repentance – they offered their own selves. They do this as an imitation of Jesus, who came to fulfill the law and who died for us in showing us how to live it. When people fail and they come to you broken, do you see your broken self in them, and show them the mercy God has shown you? Even as God has healed parts of you, do you share the struggles that remain, and offer yourself as a companion to others? Or are you content to throw a rulebook, to offer ideas void of relationship? The Word is ever and always a Person who was broken and raised. Our masks of perfection help no one – they are a curse that breaks us and others.

**Prayer of the Faithful:** For the willingness to offer our wisdom and our whole selves, we pray to the Lord.

**Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families:** Jesus, you offered us an invitation to fall in love with the law by allowing us to fall in love with you. Teach us to offer the lessons we have learned to others only inasmuch as we are willing to offer ourselves in real relationship with your people. Give us humility to identify as sinners, ever

and always in need of your mercy, even when we have been blessed by growing in wisdom and knowledge. Amen.

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## **November 12, 2017 – 32<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year A**

**Homily Idea:** *We participate in God's work of saving our lives.*

God sent Jesus to save us – and salvation is God's work. The miracle of human freedom is that God's work requires our participation. Paul offers hope to the first Christians when he reminds them that Jesus' Resurrection makes Resurrection and eternal life available to us all. The first reading and the Gospel, first with wisdom and then with eternal life, invites us to open our hearts and our lives to God's saving work. If we desire wisdom, God will pour it into our hearts. If we long for eternal life, then we are invited to participate in the work of building the Kingdom. Eternal life is not a magic pill or golden ticket; it is the continuation of abundant life that we begin living in Christ here on earth. God does not deny heaven to those who have not been awake. The sleeping cannot recognize or receive it. Salvation is the breaking open of our hearts to love, and love is something we practise and grow into, one moment and day at a time, gradually toning the spiritual muscle to become what it is.

**Prayer of the Faithful:** For the courage to stay awake and participate in God's saving work in us, we pray to the Lord.

**Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families:** Saving God, your plan for eternal life is that we participate in living it. Help us to offer our hearts and lives constantly to you, to resist the urge to hold back pieces and keep heaven from taking us over completely. Amen.

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## **November 19, 2017 – 33<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year A**

**Homily Idea:** *Life (here and in the world to come) comes from complete surrender to God.*

The first reading is often used to measure women (in ways that can feel reductive or sexist), but the Psalm is the interpretive key: Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord. Everything – our gifts, our talents, our families, our work, our time – it's all meant to be offered back to God. If we count and measure – what is mine, what must I give – we risk missing out on part or all of what God has for us. Falling asleep is not just complete rejection of God. It is also the mistake of holding back from Him parts of ourselves and our gifts. Take the risk of giving it all. You'll get everything in return.

**Prayer of the Faithful:** For complete surrender to God, we pray to the Lord.

**Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families:** Lord of heaven and earth, you have offered us everything that we might offer everything back. In a world that counts and measures and scores everything, teach us to be reckless in our surrender to you, trusting your wisdom that we don't get to keep anything we cling to anyway. Help us to cast ourselves and each other into your generous heart. Amen.

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## **November 26, 2017 – SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING**

**Homily Idea:** *The King is a Shepherd who has shown us how to live.*

When the Israelites waited for a Messiah, they expected a mighty king, a ruler, a prince, a powerful personality who would take them out of suffering into glory. And He did. But He did so as an infant, a shepherd to the meek

and persecuted, a sideline preacher who was murdered on a cross and rose anyway. We are the daughters and sons of a King, who makes us part of his Kingdom. In God's Kingdom, abundant life and great power is found in the little ways of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those who are sick and imprisoned, reaching out to those most in need, even and maybe especially when this service costs us something. Christ is King because He raises us all up. May our lives, in imitation of His, be a lifting up of those who suffer around us.

**Prayer of the Faithful:** For lives lived in imitation of our humble King, we pray to the Lord.

**Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families:** Jesus, Shepherd King, help us to imitate your power in service and smallness. Teach us to lift up the suffering and to trust in the Resurrection you have worked by giving yourself over to death. Amen.