



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.

JULY 5, 2020 – 14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year A

Homily Idea: *Are you paying attention to the life God has given to the little ones?*

In the first reading, Zechariah reminds us that God has not forgotten Jerusalem and that He comes to her in the humblest of ways. In the Gospel, we are reminded that God reveals truth to the “little ones” who are hidden from those in positions of authority. Who are the “little ones” in our society right now? The social unrest around racism suggests Black, Indigenous, and all Persons of Colour have wisdom from the edges that we need to pay attention to. God cares profoundly about those who have been isolated, ignored, and injured. His disposition when He comes is to come humbly. Racism and other injustices invite us to approach with humility those who have suffered, ready to listen to their experiences and to be attentive to the places where God is calling us to change – in our lives, in our communities, and in our churches.

Prayer of the Faithful: For ears to hear the experiences of the little ones, the suffering, and the marginalized, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of the little ones, open our hearts and ears to hear the wisdom of those who are small, suffering, or otherwise ignored. Help us follow in your humble way, that especially those whose dignity has been ignored might have access to the abundance of life you have

promised. Amen.

JULY 12, 2020 – 15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year A

Homily Idea: *The Word is a seed God plants to grow new life in us.*

Where are the hard, rocky, weedy and otherwise fruitless spots of soil in our hearts? Where are we refusing to allow God to plant His words, or resistant to hearing those words and allowing them to change us? As the first reading indicates, God's wisdom is intended to be as transformative in us as the rain is for the plants in our gardens and fields. Where things are growing well, little work is needed – we can simply enjoy the harvest when it comes. But we need to pay careful attention to the places where we do not see growth. Are the seeds not getting in? Do we need more time in prayer, meditation, reflecting on the Word? Is the soil ready for planting? Do we need to see our own resistance, sinfulness, or hardness of heart? Are there too many weeds? What unforgiveness, anger, resentment, or attachment to sin prevents the good from growing in our spiritual lives? Are we depriving the seeds of what they need to grow? Do we need more silence, rest, wisdom, mentorship, or learning in order to grow? Spend some time this week paying attention to the places where new life is not growing in your heart.

Prayer of the Faithful: For courage to examine the places we are resisting new life, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of growth and new life, plant your Word in our hearts and help us to tend to the seeds of new life. May we have the courage to see the places in ourselves that are resistant to your transforming work in us. Amen.

JULY 19, 2020 – 16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year A

Homily Idea: *God is good, even when goodness co-exists with evil in this life.*

It can be easy to become discouraged when we come face to face with evil in the world. The first reading and the Psalm promise us that God is good; He cares for us and is with us even when things are difficult. The second reading goes further to assure us that God is aching for our healing and redemption when we don't even have words for this ourselves. The Gospel gives us a glimpse of how things work in God's Kingdom: that goodness grows alongside the possibility and reality of evil, that heaven is like yeast, and that God's Kingdom is like a mustard seed. All of these metaphors remind us that the smallest ounces of grace, goodness and love are infinitely more powerful than evil. So we are challenged to place our faith in God, right in the middle of the worst, even while we work alongside for the justice that will bring abundant life for all.

Prayer of the Faithful: For faith and hope in God's goodness, even in trying times, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Good and gracious God, you send love, grace and hope into a broken world. Protect us from despair while we wait to see seeds grow, bread rise, and good emerge from the awful. Help us to call on you, to trust in you, to work alongside you for all that is good. Amen.

JULY 26, 2020 – 17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year A

Homily Idea: *God is at work for our good in this life and the next.*

We need to be faithfully committed to the promise that God is at work for our good, that God answers our prayers. In the global North, impacted by capitalism and a self-help culture, sometimes this gets twisted into a false prosperity gospel – that those who worship God will be materially wealthy and without suffering – and this is damaging. When God promises to answer Solomon’s prayer, He does so with an affirmation that Solomon wants what is good for himself and for those he serves. When God promises He is at work for our good, we can trust Him with our lives and our longings, without growing unhealthy entitlements or expectations. When we truly learn to trust God with our good in this life and the next, we grow into the peace of knowing that trust itself is a treasure far-outweighing the false security of material wealth.

Prayer of the Faithful: For trust in God’s goodness, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Trustworthy God, you are at work for our good in this life and the next. When things go differently than we plan, help us remember that you are in control, so we do not have to grasp at the impossible. Teach us to place our treasure in you, for now and for eternity. Amen.
