



**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.

MAY 2, 2021 – 5th SUNDAY OF EASTER, Year B

Homily Idea: *Life-giving love is an action.*

What difference does your faith make? What actions can you trace back to being a disciple of Jesus? And who is blessed by those actions? When we consider the challenges for the sick and dying, our faith ought to propel us to accompany others with our time, our presence, our talent and our treasure to support and tend to those who need it most. Or perhaps when we consider the challenges of care for creation, our faith is empty if we do not lessen consumption and get serious about sustainable practices. All the time we spend abiding with Jesus is meant to mould us into his hands, feet and heart of the world. Make a list of the things you do because of your faith and ask yourself who God is serving through those actions. This Easter season, ask Jesus what you could do differently. Ask him who needs love and how you can give it. Perhaps you’ll be surprised by his answers.

Prayer of the Faithful: For hearts transformed by Jesus into loving action that blesses others, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Abiding Jesus, you have connected us to the vine of divine love. May your compassion for the world flow through us and lead us deeper into a relationship with you. Help us turn towards our brothers and sisters most in need of care. May your resurrected life bring new life and

transform our hearts to best serve in your name, Amen.

MAY 9, 2021 – 6th SUNDAY OF EASTER, Year B

Homily Idea: *When we choose God's life, we are asked to reject idols.*

In the first reading, Peter's words to Cornelius are so important for us in a world consumed by polarized responses to pretty much everything: "Stand up; I am only a man." We are tempted to worship many things, even when it is hard for us to see this. If we are deeply honest with ourselves, what makes us feel most secure? A full savings account? A job where someone asks us to stay late? A TV show or social media account to binge on? Pleasing people? Believing you are right? A package arriving in the mail? Jesus is asking us to love him first so that everything else in the world will lead us back to him. Spend some time naming the things you put between you and Jesus. With the help of grace and guidance from our communities, Jesus puts us back into right relationship with everything and everyone else.

Prayer of the Faithful: For eyes to see what bends us away from Jesus and courage to love him first, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Loving God, you have loved us into being. Our joy is complete only when we live our lives in your love. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, help us remain in your love by keeping your commandments. For gratitude to be called not servants but friends, we pray to the Lord.

MAY 16, 2021 – THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD (Solemnity)

Homily Idea: *The people of life will bring life to the world.*

As Jesus appears to the disciples, he reminds them that he is giving them a mission: to bring life to the world. We are being asked to share in his work, cast out evil, speak encouraging words, fight against threats for those who are vulnerable, and heal illness and wounds of every kind. This should be the fruit of our labour, that the lost find the life Jesus has offered to us all. May we be known for these life-giving miracles that God is working in and through us for the sake of the lowest and the least.

Prayer of the Faithful: For healing, encouragement, goodness, and mercy to be our life's work, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of life, work your miracles of life in us and through us. May our neighbours experience us bringing goodness and healing, encouragement and kindness, justice and mercy to the world, Amen.

MAY 23, 2021 – PENTECOST SUNDAY (Solemnity)

Homily Idea: *The Church's life depends on our offering our gifts and receiving the gifts of others.*

We would do well to hold fast to the Letter to the Corinthians, reminding us that there are a variety of gifts but one God, who draws together everything that has been given to each for the good of all. So many in the world are divided against each other. We stop for a moment on this Pentecost and consider our brothers and sisters in faith who we scarcely recognize as our neighbour. God longs for us to see and rejoice in the gift that

has been placed in the other. The Spirit can do extraordinary things amid great diversity if we recognize that God desires and calls the ones we don't understand just as much as he needs and calls us. Whatever we have, we have been called to offer to Jesus to put at his service and that of his Kingdom and invite others to do likewise.

Prayer of the Faithful: For our many gifts to be offered to God in the Church and those on the peripheries, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Holy Spirit, pour your flame into our many hearts. Burn brightly in and through our varied and many gifts and talents. Draw us into a consuming fire of love for the world. May our differences and diversity fuel a holy flame that exceeds our wildest hopes for your kingdom to come. Amen.

MAY 30, 2021 – SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

Homily Idea: *God is with us; who are we accompanying?*

On Trinity Sunday, we often hear homilies about the theological mystery of the Trinity, but this year, perhaps we could focus on the theological miracle: that the three persons of God have promised to be with us to the end of time. We have been promised that the Triune God will never leave us. Just as Jesus came to earth to reveal this to us, we are asked to be ambassadors of this kind of love in the world. Who knows God's constant presence because you show up for them consistently? Your family and friends? Your community and neighbours? What about the sick and the suffering, the neglected and needy, the addicted and the poor? How are we bearing witness to the Triune God's constant and faithful presence as an act of faith in the Blessed Trinity? May others know God's enduring love because we have borne witness to it so well.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the willingness to enter into the mystery of who God is and how God loves, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God, the Father, Christ the Son, Spirit of Love, anoint us for your mission. Draw us into the mystery of who you are so that we might be a part of the miracle of how you love, walking us into life. Amen.
