



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.

JUNE 6, 2021 – SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (*Corpus Christi*)

Homily Idea: *God's life is poured out for us in sacrifice; what will we give of our lives?*

These readings draw us into the heart of what it means to follow Jesus with our lives. God sent his Son, who poured himself out for us, an example that this gift of life was meant to be given away. The Eucharistic table invites us to receive the sacrifice of Jesus and then leave the table to give ourselves away in love to the world, just like Jesus did. So, what difference does your faith make in the way that you live? What sacrifices are you making for the sake of loving the world? Are you purchasing less so you can give more money to those in need? Are you giving up time to serve others? Are you offering your leisure time to play or spend more time with your or make someone else's lifeless burdensome? God is not asking you to be a joyless witness, resentfully rejecting all fun or recreational things. He's asking us all to live in such a way that our lifestyle will be a gift, a light, and an invitation for others to find life's most profound joy in loving with our whole hearts.

Prayer of the Faithful: For our lives to be poured out for others in imitation of Jesus, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Jesus, you offer yourself to us through the consecrated bread and wine; may we be transformed together and become one body for our world. As we gather in our church

communities or in our domestic churches, send us forth into the world to pour ourselves out in love. Amen.

JUNE 13, 2021 – 11th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *God's life grows from the smallest seedlings.*

Does it sometimes feel like the lofty things God asks of us – holiness and heaven – are just too far out of reach? This week's readings are meant to encourage us in the tiny and unlikely places in which faith takes root and grows into something strong and beautiful. Like a mustard seed can grow into a sturdy tree, or a tiny shoot can grow into a tree on the face of a mountain, our smallest efforts at faithfulness can grow into a legacy of faith and love that outlives us on earth. Holiness and heaven are all the result of a lifetime of momentary actions: tell the truth, give without counting the cost, smile at the people God has entrusted you to love, resist the temptation to blame, ask for forgiveness, don't give up. These daily efforts are the seeds that grow into honesty, integrity, faithfulness, discipline, gentleness, and wisdom. Keep at it. This is what the Kingdom of God is made of.

Prayer of the Faithful: For perseverance in the littlest acts of faith for a lifetime, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of mustard seeds and saplings, fill us with the hope that you delight in our smallest efforts to grow toward you. Whisper to us when we have the smallest opportunity to practice our faith, and keep us faithful to our participation in your saving work in us and the world. For this we pray.

JUNE 20, 2021 – 12th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *God's vision for our lives is not always clear to us; sometimes, this is scary.*

When God chastises Job from a whirlwind, the words are chilling: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the world?" And it is only slightly less troubling for the disciples to hear Jesus say in response to their fear, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" We might hear these words and feel tempted to repress or deny our fear or doubt in the face of not understanding what God is up to when our world is upside down. Rather, these questions are invitations to ask God to be present in the chaos. Job thinks that God has abandoned him, and the disciples envision their death. God's words remind us that He is with us and is in control, so we don't have to be. When we are afraid, unsure, and confused, the invitation is to press ourselves into the Spirit who is always with us and let God carry us through our fear.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the courage to see and welcome God into our fear, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of wind and rainstorms, help us see and trust you amid chaos. Allow us to rest in the conviction that you have created the world and will continue to sustain it through your grace. Draw us deeper into the virtue of faith and help us know that you are at work raising new life. Amen.

JUNE 27, 2021 – 13th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *God does not delight in or cause death but raises the dying to new life.*

The healing work of Jesus can give us a false sense that faithfulness means we will not experience suffering, illness, or painful death. This is not true. God's healing and resurrecting work brings consolation, community, courage and perseverance to trial, destruction, and death. The promise of life is not that we will be spared from

death but that God will transform death into life. We are held by a God who raises us out of every pit, every struggle by the end. If the rising has not arrived, it is because the story is not over yet. There is a time for grieving and being broken by the pain of the world's suffering. It takes holy and inspired courage in faith to walk through intergenerational trauma, poverty, abuse, violence, tragic death, and addiction, among other challenges and hold onto hope. Jesus himself weeps for the death of Lazarus before raising him. Together in our families and communities, we walk through each day of our life story, never letting go of the hope and the trust we hold in the Resurrected Christ.

Prayer of the Faithful: For lifelong faith in the eternal resurrection work of Jesus, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Christ Jesus, bring hope and healing to the suffering. Give us wisdom and courage to face addiction, illness, trauma, suffering, and death with resurrection faith. Give us restlessness that will only relent when we join in your healing work. And give us unwavering hope that the Kingdom can come into our suffering to make us whole. Amen.
