



**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, religious and laity, are called to help others become open to the kind of relationships that makes 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 is invited to make Christ’s abundant life relevant and approachable for all.

SEPTEMBER 5, 2021 – 23rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *Those with the greatest needs are due the greatest measure of God’s – and our – life-giving love.*

The preferential option for the poor is a central social justice teaching for our Catholic faith. Rather than insisting that everyone gets the same resources, the readings remind us that those with the greatest need get the greatest share, and those with the most to give are asked to give more away to meet those needs. There are a lot of violations of this principle in our Canadian society. Too often, those experiencing chronic illness, poverty, addiction, the threat of violence, or injustice are disadvantaged compared to those who have their health, job security, relationship stability and wealth. God’s heart is closest to those in need. By calling on the Holy Spirit, we are called to sink deeply into the presence of God and offer the greater part of our blessings to those who have a greater need than we do.

Prayer of the Faithful: For a preferential option for those in greatest need, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God of the hurting, awake in us a preference for those most in need of your love. Grant us the humility to receive the care of others when we are isolated, weak and alone. Awake in us the ability to discern how to best provide consolation and support to those most in need. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 12, 2021 – 24th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *When we walk with Christ, we learn how to lay down our lives for the Kingdom.*

One of the key markers of our faith is whether or not we are living out what we believe. Some Christians cling to a false hope that professing faith in Jesus with their lips is enough. The readings renew for us the twofold reality that, "Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." Jesus rebukes Peter for opposing the path of life, a path that Jesus knew included rejection, suffering, and death. The way to eternal life is to give ourselves away in love for others, just like Jesus did. So, where do I resist following the path Jesus walked? Am I more committed to work and money than I am to living out the gospel? Am I participating in the work of healing, justice, sharing hope and mercy?

Prayer of the Faithful: For the courage to walk the way of Jesus, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Jesus, give us the courage to take up your cross and follow you. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, make us your followers in word and action. Protect us from the lie that our belief in you exempts us from the work of building your Kingdom. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 19, 2021 – 25th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *The humble are the people of life.*

This week's readings call out the self-righteous and invite us to humility. The sinner who repents finds God closer than the righteous or the sinner who justifies sin and refuses to see it. Jesus teaches us humility with the unassuming presence of a child. When we are willing to be last and the least, this is when we are transformed by the God we love.

Prayer of the Faithful: For the humility to serve others, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: God the Father, who upholds our lives, allow us to receive your loving guidance. May we see ourselves in the people we find hardest to love. May we be drawn to serve when we are tempted to judge or selfishly take the place of another. May we offer the first seats and gratefully receive what is leftover. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 26, 2021 – 26th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year B

Homily Idea: *The Spirit of God gives joy to our hearts.*

In the first reading, people report to Moses that others were prophesying as Moses usually did. They expect Moses to be upset. Instead, the Prophet reminds them that there is enough room for everyone that God calls. A comparable instance also takes place in the gospel. Jesus reassures the disciples that the Spirit of God is upon those who pray and accomplish great deeds in His name. Indeed, God's calls are not limited to a select few. Whenever anyone, anywhere, is doing God's work, we are to celebrate the fruits and gifts of the Spirit. May we, the people of God, be the people who build others up!

Prayer of the Faithful: For the gift of discernment to see and encourage others and to build them up, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer for Bulletins, Small Groups or Families: Jesus, Lord and Savior, you came to earth to walk among us, to teach us, and to commission us to do your work. May we follow you in the way of calling others forward to the work you have entrusted to us so that your work will continue when we are gone, we pray to the Lord.
