

LITURGY GUIDE

Cherishing the Evening of Life 2005

Day for Life 2005



Cherishing the Evening of Life

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Material for Sunday 3 July 2005

Sample brief introduction

The annual Day for Life was called for by Pope John Paul II. He wanted to encourage a greater awareness within the Church of the crucial importance of the Church's teaching on the gift of life. Our theme this year celebrates that gift in the lives of older people, and the witness the Church gives by working to enable older people to age with grace. In the way he approached his own death earlier this year Pope John Paul II taught us all a wonderful lesson about the dignity of old age, and the way in which death can be faced with courage and dignity, even in the face of great suffering. So today is an opportunity for the parish to reflect on and to celebrate this particular aspect of the Gift of Life.

Homily Notes

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

Reading: Zechariah 9:9–10

See now, your king comes humbly to you.

Psalm Ps 144: 1–2, 8–11, 13–14 r.1

I will bless your name for ever, O God my King.

Reading: Romans 8:9, 11–13

If by the Spirit you put an end to the misdeed of the body, you will live.

Gospel Matthew 11:25–30

I am gentle and humble of heart

The following are some ideas for the homily. In some parishes the homilist may wish to reflect on the readings with older people of the parish as a way of preparation.

Come to me and rest — for many older people this is a time of retirement.

What can be done to ease burdens and help shoulder burdens?

What words of comfort do we offer people?

I will bless your name — a time for reflection and giving thanks.

Kind and full of compassion — What assistance is offered for carers?

Mere children — how do we look after the most vulnerable in our society?

Proclaim peace to the nations — many older people will have lived through a lifetime of wars.

The Prayer of the Faithful

The general intercessions should follow the form for normal Sunday Mass and include intentions for:

- the needs of the Church;
- public authorities and the world;
- those in need;
- the local community.



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Sample Intentions

These intentions are given as examples. It is not intended that a parish should use all these intentions rather that couple may be included within a community's own intentions.

We pray for those in authority;
may they always have concern for the vulnerable in our society.

We pray for carers
may they receive the necessary help and support.

We pray for the families of our parish;
may there be love and understanding across the generations.

We pray for the lonely and the bereaved
may they know the companionship of Christ.

Dismissal of Commissioned Ministers taking Communion to those who are Housebound or Sick

An extract from Celebrating the Mass a pastoral introduction by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales published by CTS.

It is fitting for Holy Communion to be taken directly from Mass to those who are sick or unable to leave their homes.

Appropriate times for the deacons, acolytes, or commissioned ministers of Holy Communion to receive a pyx from the priest and be 'sent' to take Holy Communion and leave the assembly are either after the Communion of the people or immediately before the final blessing.

The ministers may depart before the Prayer after Communion prayer, immediately after the Prayer after-Communion or as part of the concluding procession of ministers.

Local circumstances will determine which of these various options will be most fitting in any particular parish.

The Presider will normally speak words of dismissal or missioning over the ministers taking Holy Communion to those who are sick or housebound. These words may be based on the words of the Communion antiphon, on the readings of the day, or in a simple form such as:

*Go now, to our sisters and brothers
unable to be with us for reasons of sickness and infirmity.
Take to them from our celebration
the word of God and Holy Communion,
that they might share with us
these signs of the Lord's goodness.*

Blessing of older people

The following blessing from the *Book of Blessings* may be used at the end of Mass before the Blessing and Dismissal.

Prayer of Blessing

The priest holds his hands outstretched over the elderly people as a group as he says the prayer of blessing.

Lord, our God,
you have given these your faithful
the grace to maintain their hope in you
through all life's changes
and to taste and see your goodness.
We bless you for the gifts you have showered on them for so many years.
We ask that they may find joy in a renewed strength of spirit,
that they may have good health,
and that they may inspire us by the example of their serene way of life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Or

All-powerful and ever-living God,
in we live and move and have our being,
we thank you and we praise you
for giving N. and N. (the members of this community) long years,
lived in faith and in doing good.
Grant that they may have the loving support of their friends and relatives,
that in good health they may be cheerful,
and in poor health not lose hope.
Sustained by the help of your blessing,
let them spend their old age giving praise to your name.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen

After the prayer, the celebrant adds:

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit,
come upon you and remain with you.
Amen.

Holy Hour

The celebration of Sunday does not have to be limited to Sunday Mass. In this Year of the Eucharist it would be appropriate to have a Holy Hour. The materials prepared by the Liturgy Office and available on its website [[www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/ Resources/YOE](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/YOE)] would be suitable.
In particular:

4. Sharing in the life of the Lord
5. Alive in Christ

Acknowledgements

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Prayer for parish meetings

This short prayer is intended for use at parish meetings in the week before and after the Day for Life (3 July 2005). You will need someone to lead the prayer as well as readers for the scripture reading and the intercessions.

If you use A Time of Prayer prepared by the Liturgy Office and published by CTS for prayer at parish meetings you may wish to use Psalm 145 (Wednesday) together with the reader and prayers provided below,

Structure

Sign of the Cross
Reading
Period of silent reflection
Intercessions
Lord's Prayer
Concluding Prayer

Sign of the Cross

Leader: In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
All: Amen.

Reading

How attractive is sound judgment in the grey-haired, and for the aged to possess good counsel! How attractive is wisdom in the aged, and understanding and counsel in the venerable! Rich experience is the crown of the aged, and their boast is the fear of the Lord.

How great is the one who finds wisdom! But none is superior to the one who fears the Lord. Fear of the Lord surpasses everything; to whom can we compare the one who has it? The fear of the Lord is the beginning of love for him and faith is the beginning of clinging to him.

Ecclesiasticus 25:4-6, 10-12

or

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of

Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Luke 2:25–32, 36–38

Period of silent reflection

Intercessions

We pray for the older people of our community (communities):

Pause for silent prayer

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for families torn apart through war and suffering:

Pause for silent prayer

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for those in authority that they may always have concern for those who are vulnerable in society and cherish their lives.

Pause for silent prayer

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for all those who support older people in their daily work:

Pause for silent prayer

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for those who are lonely or housebound:

Pause for silent prayer

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for members of our own families who have died and for all those who mourn their loss:

Pause for silent prayer

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

[People may be invited to pray for their own intentions]



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Lord's Prayer

Leader Jesus invited us to call God our Father
and so we have the courage to say:

All Our Father...

Concluding Prayer

Leader Lord, our God,
you have given these your faithful
the grace to maintain their hope in you
through all life's changes
and to taste and see your goodness.
We bless you for the gifts you have showered on them
for so many years.
We ask that they may find joy in a renewed strength of spirit,
that they may have good health,
and that they may inspire us by the example of their serene way of life.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

All Amen.

or

Leader Father,
your Son accepted our sufferings
to teach us the virtue of patience in human illness.
Hear the prayers we offer for our sick brothers and sisters.
May all who suffer pain, illness, or disease
realise that they have chosen to be saints
and know that they are joined to Christ
in his suffering for the salvation of the World.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Acknowledgements

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www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources

This document may be copied freely for parish use.

Further Resources

This material is provided not only for use at the time of the Day for Life but as resources for throughout the year both directly to support older people and raise awareness of their importance for the wider community. It is important that the Gospel of Life we preach and try to live should be reflected in the opportunities we provide for prayer and worship.

Older people in the parish

The term 'older people' can be a catch-all for a large group of people in the parish. There can be as much difference between 65 and 90 and is there is between 5 and 30. Care should also be taken to avoid equating age and incapacity.

From the General Directory for Catechesis

Old age, gift of God to the Church

186. In many countries, the growing number of old people represents a new and specific pastoral challenge for the Church. Not infrequently the old are seen as passive objects and possibly even as an encumbrance. In the light of faith, however, they must be understood as a gift of God to the Church and to society, and must also be given adequate catechetical care. In catechesis, they have the same rights and duties as all Christians. Attention must always be paid to the diversity of personal, family and social conditions.

Wisdom and dialogue

188. The Bible presents us with the figure of the old man as the symbol of a person rich in wisdom and fear of God, and as a repository of an intense experience of life, which, in a certain sense, makes him a natural "catechist" in the community. He is a witness to a tradition of faith, a teacher of life, and a worker of charity. Catechesis values this grace. It helps the aged to discover the riches within themselves and to assume the role of catechists among children—for whom they are often valued grandparents—and for young people and adults. Thus a fundamental dialogue between the generations can be promoted both within the family and within the community.

The Church Building

The physical environment of the church building and the needs of older people should be considered. Many of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act will also address the needs of older people such as the safe access to the building (including the sanctuary); good lighting, a loop system and the provision of large print texts

Caring for those who are sick or housebound

A section on taking Holy Communion to the sick and housebound from Sunday Mass is included in the Sunday material.

It is good to make connections with the Sunday Liturgy: the reading, prayers and music.

To take a copy of the Sunday Newsletter and any other material.

The parish might like to provide the sick and housebound with prayer materials. Suitable booklets are published by: CTS [www.cts-online.org.uk]; McCrimmons [www.mccrimmons.com]; The Prayer Trust [www.theprayertrust.org.uk].

The sick and the housebound might be invited to pray for the parish community in particular those preparing to celebrate Sacraments.

The parish should provide opportunities for reflection and support for those who visit the sick and housebound together with possibility of making connections with other groups in the parish involved in pastoral care.

A reflection on the Introduction of *Celebrating the Mass* (1–17) and how the parish supports the spiritual journey of the sick and the housebound may be useful. See also *General Directory for Catechesis* (186–188)

A parish might also consider what support it can offer to carers.

A guide to *Pastoral Care of the Sick* is available for downloading from the website www.dayforlife.org



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Caring for the Bereaved

Many parishes have found the setting up of a bereavement group to be of immense benefit to the community. Many diocesan adult formation teams will offer training and support for setting up a group. A group can assist with not only the preparation of the funeral but also those small tasks that help daily living.

One parish set up a monthly Sunday lunch club that brought together single people of all ages. It started when a couple of people who had been bereaved realised that their experience of Sunday had changed when they no longer had someone to share Sunday lunch with.

Blessings

The *Book of Blessings*, which is authorised for use in England and Wales, contains a number of appropriate texts.

An extract from the Order for the Blessing of Elderly People has been included in the material for Sunday Mass. The following is a list of sections: that may be particularly appropriate:

- Chapter 1 Orders for the Blessing of Families and Members of Families
- XII. Order for the Blessing of Older people confined to their homes
- Chapter 2 Orders for the Blessing of the Sick
- Chapter 7 Order for the Blessing of Organisations concerned with Public Need
- II:11 Order of the Blessing of a (New) Home
- VI:66 Order of Welcoming of New Parishioners
- VI:67 Order of Blessing of a Departing Parishioner

Celebrating Marriage

In the notes for last year's Day for Life there were suggestions about celebrating marriage within the parish.

Parishes may like to invite to a special service once a year those who have been married in the church in the last year together with other members of the community who celebrate significant anniversaries in the year. This marks the significance of each and provides an opportunity for mutual witness.

Liturgical material for celebrating anniversaries is available for downloading from the website www.dayforlife.org

Retirement

Retirement can mean a new pattern of life for people.

An opportunity to be more involved in the life of the parish both in its liturgy (attending daily Mass or other weekday liturgies and times of prayer) and its life of service.

- Catechesis
- *Ascent* Group
- Peer ministry
- Helping staff crèche at Mother and Toddlers group
- Ministry to those who are sick or housebound

It can mean a change of the pattern of people's days. Some may like to structure their day by use of part of the Liturgy of the Hours. *A time of prayer* (CTS) has been prepared by the Liturgy Office as a simple introduction to a daily office. Retirement can mean moving home for some people.

A prayer at retirement

All praise and glory are yours,
almighty and eternal God.
You created this earth and all it contains
and placed creation within our care
so that by the work of human hands
we might share in your creative power
and build up human society.

Look with kindness
upon N., [our coworker,
who has contributed to our
community/company
and] who is now retiring/has retired.
Allow him/her the time
to survey all that he/she has
accomplished
and give him/her satisfaction and
fulfilment
for all his/her labours,
as you did on the seventh day,
when you rested and saw that all you
made was good.

Give him/her peace and help him/her
in this period of adjustment.
Reassure him/her of your love
and open new ways for him/her
to share his/her gifts for the benefit of
others.

We praise you, God of love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen



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Intercessions

Intercessions and a prayer from St Joseph's Hospice, London, is attached which may be adapted to local circumstances.

We give you thanks and praise, O Lord
for the inspiration behind the Hospice Movement,
which speaks of your care and compassion for all people.

We ask you to watch over the work of St Joseph's Hospice
and grant that it may reflect your love for all.
Lord hear us...

We pray for those in our communities
who work so hard to support the Hospice,
grant them continued zeal and vigour in their vital task.
Lord hear us...

We pray for the staff of St Joseph's
that they may bring Christ's compassion to the sick
by being channels of his loving care.
Lord hear us...

We pray for the patients and their families.
May they experience the compassion of Christ
through those who comfort them.
Lord hear us...

We pray for those who have died.
May they share in the joy of the risen Christ
who fully shared in our human life.
Lord hear us...

We pray for those who have suffered the loss of a loved one.
May the Lord comfort them in their sorrow
and grant them courage and strength.
Lord hear us...

Loving Father,
we ask you to accept these and all our prayers
through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

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A prayer for our Hospice

O Lord,
you took upon yourself our flesh
and so bless every moment of life,
from the earliest beginnings
to the very last moments.
Bless our efforts to provide hospice care
for those who come to us;
as we build,
may our foundations be made of love, care and compassion;
help us to cater
for all the spiritual, physical and emotional needs
of those who are suffering.
Help us to remember
that, unless the Lord builds the house,
the builders labour in vain.
Amen.

St Joseph's Hospice, Mare Street, London E8 4SA