

Day for Life 2007 — *Blessed is the fruit of your womb*

Material for Sunday

Some points for an Introduction

- Today our bishops ask us to celebrate a Day for Life. This year we focus on what is at the heart of life — saying yes to God.
- To say yes to God is to say yes to life, just as Mary said yes. Saying yes to life is to be pro-life. To promote life so that all may have abundantly.
- In his recent Apostolic Exhortation Pope Benedict reminds us that we cannot fully participate in the liturgy ‘without an accompanying effort to participate in the life of the Church as a whole, including a missionary commitment to bring Christ’s love to society’.
- To bring Christ’s love to society, to be pro-life means facing hard issues. We live in a society that degrades the fullness of life through abortion, destructive embryo and embryonic stem cell research, genetic engineering, and the threat of euthanasia. The teaching of the Church that every life has purpose, meaning and inherent value.
- To help us reflect on these issues further there is a short leaflet which will be given out at the end of Mass. There will also be a collection to support the Day for Life in particular the work of the Linacre Centre for healthcare ethics.

Homily Notes

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C

Reading 1 Kings 19:16. 19–21

Elisha rose and followed Elijah

Psalm Ps 15: 1–2. 5. 7–11 r. cf. v. 5

O Lord, it is you who are my portion.

Reading Galatians 5:1. 13–18

You were called to liberty

Gospel Luke 9:51–62

Jesus took the road for Jerusalem. I will you wherever you go.

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

- *Follow me* — We have a choice: choose life or choose death. Jesus invites us to follow him on the path of life.
- *Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you* — To follow Christ is not necessarily the easy choice. Those who find themselves facing difficult questions of life, when they may find their ‘soul among the dead’ need to know that the Lord will not leave them.
- *You were called to liberty* — God’s gift of freedom is at the heart of the Gospel of Life. The freedom to live life to the full. The freedom to enable others to have life. St Paul warns us against self-indulgence, against putting

oneself first rather than serving one another, confusing 'pro-choice' with true freedom.

- *What do we need to let go of, leave behind, to choose life?*
- *How do we show people the path of life so that they always know that Christ will never abandon them?*

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.

Sample Intentions

These intentions are given as examples. It is not intended that a parish should use all these intentions rather than one or two of them might be added to the other intentions a community prays for this Sunday. The prayer on the leaflet may be used as a concluding prayer.

We pray for those in authority;
may they always respect the sacredness of human life..

We pray for a change of mind and heart in our society;
may we recognise the value of every human life.

We pray for parents and mothers faced with difficult decisions;
may they find comfort and support from God's people.

We pray for all involved in healthcare;
may they always cherish the gift of life.

Reflection

Worship pleasing to God can never be a purely private matter, without consequences for our relationships with others: it demands a public witness to our faith. Evidently, this is true for all the baptized, yet it is especially incumbent upon those who, by virtue of their social or political position, must make decisions regarding fundamental values, such as respect for human life, its defence from conception to natural death, the family built upon marriage between a man and a woman, the freedom to educate one's children and the promotion of the common good in all its forms. These values are not negotiable. Consequently, Catholic politicians and legislators, conscious of their grave responsibility before society, must feel particularly bound, on the basis of a properly formed conscience, to introduce and support laws inspired by values grounded in human nature. There is an objective connection here with the Eucharist.

Sacramentum Caritatis 83