



Word of Life

January 2013

Intercessions for Life January 2013

January 6th SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

For our nation:
that we honor God as our Creator
and recognize His image in every human life;
We pray to the Lord:

January 13th FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

For all Christians:
That by virtue of our baptism, we may be strengthened
in the Holy Spirit to courageously defend the lives of the unborn;
We pray to the Lord:

January 20th SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

For all women considering abortion:
That through the intercession of Our Lady, they may lovingly accept
and welcome the mystery of life within them;
We pray to the Lord:

January 27th THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

For all mothers and fathers who have chosen abortion,
That they may trust in the Mercy of Christ,
and allow Him to heal the wounds of their sin.
We pray to the Lord.

For additional prayers for Life, Marriage and Religious Liberty, go to www.usccb.org/life-marriage-liberty.

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Bulletin Briefs

January 2013

The path to the attainment of the common good and to peace is above all that of respect for human life in all its many aspects, beginning with its conception, through its development and up to its natural end. True peacemakers, then, are those who love, defend and promote human life in all its dimensions, personal, communitarian and transcendent. Life in its fullness is the height of peace. Anyone who loves peace cannot tolerate attacks and crimes against life.

~Pope Benedict XVI, "Message for the World Day of Peace," January 1, 2013

Those who insufficiently value human life and, in consequence, support among other things the liberalization of abortion, perhaps do not realize that in this way they are proposing the pursuit of a false peace. The flight from responsibility, which degrades human persons, and even more so the killing of a defenseless and innocent being, will never be able to produce happiness or peace.

~Pope Benedict XVI, "Message for the World Day of Peace," January 1, 2013

There is also a need to acknowledge and promote the natural structure of marriage as the union of a man and a woman in the face of attempts to make it juridically equivalent to radically different types of union; such attempts actually harm and help to destabilize marriage, obscuring its specific nature and its indispensable role in society.

~Pope Benedict XVI, "Message for the World Day of Peace," January 1, 2013

One of the fundamental human rights, also with reference to international peace, is the right of individuals and communities to religious freedom. At this stage in history, it is becoming increasingly important to promote this right not only from the negative point of view, as freedom from – for example, obligations or limitations involving the freedom to choose one's religion – but also from the positive point of view, in its various expressions, as freedom for – for example, bearing witness to one's religion, making its teachings known, engaging in activities in the educational, benevolent and charitable fields which permit the practice of religious precepts. ...

~Pope Benedict XVI, "Message for the World Day of Peace," January 1, 2013

No one should ignore or underestimate the decisive role of the family, which is the basic cell of society from the demographic, ethical, pedagogical, economic and political standpoints. The family has a natural vocation to promote life: it accompanies individuals as they mature and it encourages mutual growth and enrichment through caring and sharing. The Christian family in particular serves as a seedbed for personal maturation according to the standards of divine love. The family is one of the indispensable social subjects for the achievement of a culture of peace. The rights of parents and their primary role in the education of their children in the area of morality and religion must be safeguarded. It is in the family that peacemakers, tomorrow's promoters of a culture of life and love, are born and nurtured.

~Pope Benedict XVI, "Message for the World Day of Peace," January 1, 2013

Abortion not only took my baby's life, but it almost took mine. I am thankful for the Church and Project Rachel Ministry, for teaching me to love myself, and to live for God.

~ Mother's testimony. (If you or a loved one is hurting from an abortion, call Project Rachel Ministry toll-free at 888-456-HOPE for free, confidential counseling. See www.hopeafterabortion.org.)

SUGGESTED PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

A CALL TO PRAYER FOR LIFE, MARRIAGE & RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

*As part of the bishops' Call to Prayer for Life, Marriage, and Religious Liberty, it is encouraged that at Sunday and daily Masses the **Prayers of the Faithful** include specific intentions for respect for all human life from conception to natural death, the strengthening of marriage and family life, and the preservation of religious liberty at all levels of government, both at home and abroad. The following Prayers of the Faithful are suggestions for use/adaptation. Further resources can be found at www.usccb.org/life-marriage-liberty.*

For life, marriage and religious liberty:

For Pope Benedict XVI, bishops, priests, and all the faithful, that we may be strengthened by the grace of the Holy Spirit to continue proclaiming the dignity of all human life from conception to natural death, the unique meaning of marriage, and the importance of religious liberty for all. Let us pray to the Lord.

For all those who serve us in elected office, that they enact laws and policies that uphold the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death, the dignity of marriage as the permanent, faithful and fruitful union of a man and a woman, and authentic liberty for all. Let us pray to the Lord.

For our parish and our country, that we will become ever more aware of the dignity of all human life from conception to natural death, the beauty of God's plan for marriage, and the significance of full and authentic religious liberty. Let us pray to the Lord.

For life:

For parents and grandparents who have lost a child through abortion, that God will console them in their grief and lead them to forgiveness and healing in Confession and through the Church's Project Rachel Ministry. Let us pray to the Lord.

That this Year of Faith will awaken in the hearts of all Catholics a renewed sense of awe and gratitude for the gift of human life, and a renewed determination to protect all lives from conception to natural death. Let us pray to the Lord.

For those in the twilight of their lives, that their families and caregivers will cherish them and care for them with tender compassion, rejecting the path to assisted suicide. Let us pray to the Lord.

For marriage:

For all married couples, that they continue to live their vocation of love as an example to their families and to the world of God's faithful, fruitful, and lasting love. Let us pray to the Lord.

For all those suffering from troubled or broken marriages, especially children, that they will be assured of God the Father's unfailing care for them. Let us pray to the Lord.

For all those discerning a vocation to the priesthood, consecrated life, or marriage, that the Lord guide their hearts and make His will clear for their lives. Let us pray to the Lord.

For religious liberty:

For our President, Governor, legislators, judges, and all in service to the common good, that through the gift of heavenly wisdom they may work to uphold religious freedom and conscience protection for all. Let us pray to the Lord.

For people of faith who fight to preserve religious liberty, may the Lord strengthen their resolve to hold firm in their witness. Let us pray to the Lord.

For the rights of individuals and institutions to conduct their professional lives according to their religious convictions. Let us pray to the Lord.

A DAY OF PRAYER AND PENANCE FOR LIFE—JANUARY 22, 2013

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SUPREME COURT ABORTION DECISIONS

In all the Dioceses of the United States of America, January 22 (or January 23, when January 22 falls on a Sunday) shall be observed as a particular day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion. The liturgical celebrations for this day may be the Mass “For Giving Thanks to God for the Gift of Human Life” (no. 48/1 of the Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions), celebrated with white vestments, or the Mass “For the Preservation of Peace and Justice” (no. 30 of the Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions), celebrated with violet vestments. (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 373; American adaptation).

Preaching for Life

(using optional readings Is 49:1-6/ Ps 8:4-5, 6-7, 8-9/ Mt 18:1-5, 10, 12-14)

Today we solemnly observe the fortieth anniversary of the Supreme Court’s tragic abortion decisions in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* that created an unlimited abortion license. How could our nation—founded on Christian principles—have gone so far astray?

Perhaps it is true that every generation must face its own moral crisis. Perhaps every generation must be reminded of the truth that each human being, from the moment of conception, has a sublime dignity and worth. From Genesis we learn that man, in his reason and in his will, is made in the very image and likeness of God. As a result of this, man is given a special role as custodian and ruler over all creation. As we heard in today’s responsorial psalm, “Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.” Men and women are given this dominion to care for all creation, especially human life. It is the duty of every person, and especially of every Catholic, to promote and safeguard the dignity of all human beings.

As we see in the first reading from Isaiah, God calls each of us into existence out of love. Isaiah says, “The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.” Hence, all humans have an invaluable worth and dignity due to their being a daughter or son of God from conception.

Today we reflect on the devastating consequences when a culture rejects the belief that every human life has infinite value. In today’s gospel reading Jesus reminds us that “it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost.” Yet 53 million unborn children in our country have lost their lives, and nearly always for the sake of the convenience of their parents, families and communities. For accepting, condoning and participating in these deaths, countless people have been wounded by the part they’ve played. And society as a whole suffers from a general cheapening of life that we see played out in so many areas. We have been descending, progressively and imperceptibly, into a culture of death. But while we contemplate the great losses over these past forty years, let us never forget God’s great mercy and his promise of hope for the future.

Trusting in the salvation won for us by Christ on the cross and the great mercy of God, let us acknowledge our personal and national responsibility and seek forgiveness for ourselves and for our country. In today’s reading from Isaiah, we hear God’s desire “to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to

him....” Taking Isaiah as our example, we are also called to be messengers of God’s mercy to all who have been hurt and wounded by abortion.

The fortieth anniversary of legalized abortion in the United States falls within what Pope Benedict XVI has called the Year of Faith, a time of study, prayer and recommitment to the teachings of our faith. During the Year of Faith we are given a special opportunity to acknowledge the great tragedy of abortion and to make reparation for our part. We are invited to rededicate ourselves to transforming a culture of death into a culture of life, while always trusting in God’s mercy. Let us embrace our mission of promoting life in all of its stages during this Year of Faith by being radiant examples of Christ’s welcoming and forgiving love in our world.

Intercessions for Life

For all who march for life,
in Washington D.C. and across our nation:
that their voices may be heard
and the lives of children may be saved;
We pray to the Lord:

For our President:
that as he begins this term of office
he may stand for the rights of all citizens
from conception to natural death;
We pray to the Lord:

For all children who will be born today:
that they may come to know a world
which chooses life over death
and light over darkness;
We pray to the Lord:

For obstetrical nurses and doctors
and all who nurture the life of children in the
womb:
that God might bless them for their faith,
compassion and love;
We pray to the Lord:

For all little children who await the birth of a
new sister or brother:
that the joyful expectation that shows in their
eyes may inspire their parents to hope and
conviction;

For all newly married couples:
that their future children
may draw them closer to Christ
and to the love which is the purpose of our
lives;
We pray to the Lord:

For all couples who prepare for marriage:
that the thought of their first child
may draw them closer to each other and to
Christ;
We pray to the Lord:

For our Bishops, Priests and Deacons:
that God might make them worthy shepherds,
ever promoting and sustaining the Gospel of
Life;
We pray to the Lord:

For all who have been scarred by the tragedy
of abortion:
for repentance, healing and peace;
We pray to the Lord:

For those who pray before abortion facilities,
march before legislatures, circulate
petitions and speak insistently for life:
that God might reward them for their
goodness;
We pray to the Lord: