

WORD OF LIFE: SEPTEMBER 2023

Recommended dates are provided, but you are welcome to use these materials at any time!

September 9, 2023

Memorial of Saint Peter Claver, Priest National Day of Prayer for Peace in Our Communities

St. Peter Claver was a Jesuit missionary from Spain who, in the 1600s, served and ministered to captured and enslaved Africans as they were taken off the slave ships landing in South America. St. Peter Claver desired to offer his life as “a slave of the slaves.”¹

The U.S. Catholic bishops suggest that parishes “could use the National Day of Prayer for Peace in Our Communities, which falls on the feast of St. Peter Claver (September 9), to organize activities that foster community, dialogue, and reconciliation. These encounters will help open our minds and hearts more fully and continue the healing needed in our communities and our nation.”²

The following resources are available:

- [Prayer Service for the Feast Day of St. Peter Claver](#)
- [Prayer for Peace in Our Communities](#)
- [Prayer of the Faithful for the Day of Prayer for Peace in Our Communities](#)

Additional resources for the Day of Prayer are [available here](#) and in the [Final Report and Recommendations from the Special Task Force to Promote Peace in Our Communities](#). (See page 5 and appendices A1-A3.) Additional resources from the Ad Hoc Committee against Racism can be found at www.usccb.org/racism.

¹ Collect from the Mass of Saint Peter Claver, *Roman Missal, Third Edition*.

² USCCB, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*, 25.

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Racism and Life Issues

In their November 2018 Pastoral Letter Against Racism, [Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love](#), the U.S. Catholic bishops wrote, “racism occurs because a person ignores the fundamental truth that ... all [humans are] equally made in the image of God.”¹ Racism fails to acknowledge the dignity with which God creates each person, and it contributes to a culture of death. The Church in the United States has spoken out consistently against abortion, assisted suicide, euthanasia, the death penalty, and other threats to human life; it is not a secret that these attacks have severely affected people of color. These brothers and sisters are targeted for **abortion**, disproportionately affected by **poverty**, have the greatest numbers on **death row**, and are most likely to feel pressure to end their lives through **assisted suicide** when facing serious illness.²

The feast of St. Peter Claver is an opportunity to highlight the connection between racism and various attacks against human life. As St. John Paul II reminded us, “*Where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly consistent*. It cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an indivisible good”³ (emphasis added.) Additional [parish resources for combatting racism](#) are available online.

¹ USCCB, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*, 4.

² *Ibid*, 30.

³ Pope Saint John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), no. 87.

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Intercessions for Life

September 3rd

May the life of every human person,
from conception to natural death,
be protected in our laws
and cherished in our hearts;
We pray to the Lord:

**Twenty-second Sunday
in Ordinary Time**

September 10th

For solidarity and peace
in our global human family:
that we may work together
to protect the lives of those
who are most vulnerable;
We pray to the Lord:

**Twenty-third Sunday
in Ordinary Time**

September 17th

For all whose hearts ache
from participating in abortion:
may they be strengthened to seek
the Lord's compassion, mercy, and healing
in the Sacrament of Reconciliation;
We pray to the Lord:

**Twenty-fourth Sunday
in Ordinary Time**

September 24th

For all who are forgotten or cast off,
especially the unborn, the poor, the sick, and the aged:
may they be treated according to the dignity
with which God created them;
We pray to the Lord:

**Twenty-fifth Sunday
in Ordinary Time**

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Bulletin Quotes

September 3rd

“The Church has consistently taught that every human life is precious and worthy of protection.”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

“Another Look at Abortion”

respectlife.org/another-look-at-abortion



[Download](#)

September 10th

“By our baptism, we are members of Christ’s body and sharers in his mission. Imitating Christ, we must care for all members of our communities, honoring each person as unique, sacred, and created in the image of God.”

USCCB, “Open Wide Our Hearts” Bulletin Insert



[Download](#)

September 17th

“Throughout salvation history, God has welcomed repentant sinners with special joy. Jesus concludes the parable of the lost sheep with these words: ‘there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance’ (Lk 15:7)*.”

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USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

“Life Matters: Forgiveness and Healing After Abortion”



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September 24th

“Suicidal individuals—with or without a terminal illness—typically do not want to die... The patient requesting assisted suicide is often asking, ‘Does anyone want me to be alive, or care enough to talk me out of this request and support me through this difficult time?’”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

“Every Suicide is Tragic”



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Bulletin Art

You are welcome to use these, provided they are not altered in any way, other than the size. Thank you!

Sunday, September 17th, 2023



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Sunday, September 24th, 2023



- Image: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

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