

Liturgy Guide

Respect Life 2006-2007

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The Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities is grateful to the Reverend Monsignor James P. Moroney, Executive Director, USCCB Secretariat for the Liturgy, for preparing all of the written materials herein, with the exception of the “Novena for the Feast of the Annunciation,” for which we wish to thank Theresa Notare, M.A., Assistant Director of the USCCB Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning.

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Respect Life Sunday October 1, 2006

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (*Lectionary for Mass*, no. 137)

Nm 11:25-29 *Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets!*

Jas 5:1-6 *Your wealth has rotted away.*

Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48 *If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off.*

Preaching for Life

Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets! The spirit of God comes to rest on the seventy elders so that they might prophesy in the name of the Lord. The need for prophets was so great that Moses would be happy if he had as many prophets as there were people of Israel! How much more do we need prophets today!

When one in four children in their mother's womb are not safe from being killed by abortion. When euthanasia is advocated as a way of ending the lives of those who are terminally ill or cognitively impaired. When children are abused, neglected, and forced to live on the street. When marriage is viewed as a legal contract whose meaning is debated by legislators and jurists and not as a sacred covenant given by God. When the family breaks more often than it thrives. When the very old and the very young are seen as dispensable, a commodity to be warehoused or disposed of or forgotten. We need prophets. May God send forth his spirit to anoint them!

The Law of the Lord

The Responsorial Psalm today speaks of law. Most of us encounter the law when we drive too fast on the way to work, or misfile our taxes, or watch Court TV.

Most of

us see the law as something affecting the characters on "Law and Order" or the subjects of the latest trial we read about in the newspaper.

But the law is quite different than that. THE LAW is the law of God, and we just sang a song claiming that it brings joy to the heart, that it refreshes the soul, and that it brings wisdom to the simple. Such a law has not been written in any human law book, but on the human heart. The Psalmist tells us this law lasts forever; it is born of fear of the LORD, pure, true and just. Jesus tells us about this law. It begins with love of the Ten Commandments and the command that we should love the Lord our God with our whole heart and souls, and our neighbor as ourselves. It is a law which calls us to sell all we have and give everything to God, to be like Christ on the cross.

From the time of Abel, God's law has viewed the murder of the innocent as among the greatest sins against God's law. God's law brings joy; sin brings

despair. It rules over us, as the psalmist tells us, and we must strive to be freed from it. Violations of the Gospel of Life are particularly virulent in this regard. They seem expedient, convenient and a solution to all our problems at the moment of their commission. But violation of the law of the LORD, written on the heart of every human being, eats away at us, from the inside out. Two choices are always before us: The law, the good and the life versus selfishness, evil and death. And we get to choose.

Your wealth has rotted away.

Was anyone ever as stark as St. James in predicting misery for the rich? Those who place their trust in wealth will see it rot away. They'll see their fine clothes eaten by moths. Their gold and silver will corrode with the same corrosion that will devour their flesh with fire. No wonder he tells the rich to weep and wail!

Why are these rich people so miserable? Because they have been unjust. Their ill-gotten gains came from defrauding their employees, and ignoring the cries of those they deprived. But even if their ears are closed to the cry of their victims, these cries "have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts." So God condemns them for choosing their luxury and pleasure over the life of the poor man. Their crime is clear: "You have murdered the righteous one."

The application of this text to those who would kill a child in her mother's womb is frightening. But so, too, is its application to those who refuse to work for the Gospel of Life:

- Who choose political expediency over the life of the unborn child
- Who attend to their own comforts when defenseless children need their support
- Who sit in a pew listening to a sermon, but refuse to let it change their lives
- Who see the Gospel of Life as an abstraction, not as a personal obligation
- Who never visit their parents or listen to their children
- Who never pray for the man on death row, or work for his life to be spared
- Who never grapple with the moral dimensions of embryonic stem cell research

Do we work for the Gospel of Life? Do we work to save the little one whom everyone else defrauds? Or do we fatten our hearts for the day of judgment. Tough words, but true for those who live their lives in splendid isolation.

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off.

What is the worst sin? Is it murder or apostasy? Many men and women, far more intelligent than you and I, have tried to answer that question. But it is clear from Christ's words that it is a very great sin indeed to lead a "little one" into sin! The "little ones" are Christ's disciples, and it is clear from his words that nothing in life

is worth more than virtue. Not even my hand, my foot or my eye is worth more than doing what God requires of me. That is why preaching and working for the Gospel of

Life is so essential. The choice is clear: obedience or disobedience, life or death, virtue or sin, heaven or hell. It is that clear.

Intercessions for Life

For President Bush, the members of Congress
and the Supreme Court,
that they may have the courage and wisdom to establish and promote laws
which protect the dignity of human life
from conception until natural death;
We pray to the Lord:

For all unborn children,
and especially for the babies of unmarried mothers,
that God might send an angel to protect them;
We pray to the Lord:

For all mothers, particularly those who are with child,
that they may be supported
by loved ones and warm friends,
and that they may be understood and blessed;
We pray to the Lord:

For the children who have died from abortion in our nation,
and for their mothers and fathers,
for mercy, peace and the loving embrace of Christ;
We pray to the Lord:

For all who work for life,
and especially those who pray at abortion clinics,
that God might reward them for their prayers;
We pray to the Lord:

For all whose hearts ache from the sin of abortion,
that God will soothe and heal them with the balm of his mercy;
We pray to the Lord:

For a growing love of God's little ones,
in the womb, in the nursing home or at death's door.
That we might love with the love of Jesus;
We pray to the Lord:

For all mothers,
especially those who are young or alone, beaten or addicted;
that God might heal their broken hearts
and seal them with his love;
We pray to the Lord:

For our Church,
that through the proclamation of the Gospel of Life,
we might live the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ,
and proclaim his good news to all the world;
We pray to the Lord:

A Day of Prayer and Penance for Life: January 23, 2007

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 penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life. The Mass "For Peace and Justice" (no. 22 of the "Masses for Various Needs") should be celebrated with violet vestments as an appropriate liturgical observance for this day.

General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 373

Preaching for Life

Today the priest has a choice between several different readings. He may preach on the Readings of the Day, or one of the sets of readings from the Mass for Peace and Justice.

Readings of the Day (*Lectionary for Mass, no. 318*)

Hebrews 10:1-10 *Behold, I come to do your will, O God.*

Mark 3:31-35 *Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.*

Today's readings urge us to do the will of God. That is the way to be called the brother, the sister, or the mother of the Lord. For what God desires is not burnt offerings or sacrifices, but that we do his will. God's will is revealed to the little ones and brings about justice through a proclamation of God's truth. In the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope John Paul II proclaims "the Gospel of life, the splendour of truth which enlightens consciences, the clear light which corrects the darkened gaze, and the unfailing source of faithfulness and steadfastness in facing the ever new challenges which we meet along our path" (EV, no. 6). This is the truth which all who seek the will of God are obliged to proclaim.

Readings from the Mass for Peace and Justice

Readings from the Old Testament

(*Lectionary for Mass, no. 887*)

Isaiah 9:1-6 His dominion is vast and forever peaceful (LFM, no. 887)

Isaiah promises that the yoke will be lifted from those unjustly burdened, and the weapons of death and destruction will be smashed. Whenever those who work for life become discouraged, they should recall that their Lord is the God who can make even the desert bloom, and who created life itself!

Isaiah 57:15-19 Peace, peace for all, both far and near There are times we are lost.

Times when we feel alone and are not sure where to turn. The young woman who

is pregnant knows how that feels. So does the old man who no one visits in the

nursing home. Isaiah reminds them that they are not alone and that God is with every person whose heart aches from loneliness and fear. He knew your name from the day you were conceived in your mother's womb. He will be with you up to the moment you pass from this life.

Readings from the New Testament

(Lectionary for Mass, no. 889)

Philippians 4:6-9 The peace of God will guard your hearts and minds

We work for life. We work to promote what is true, honorable, just and pure. There are many ways to achieve this goal. There is political action, teaching, and lobbying. But let us never forget that the most effective way to achieve justice for those unjustly deprived of life is by prayer and petition. While the world may doubt it, it is only by prayer that true change is ever achieved.

Colossians 3:12-15 Let the peace of Christ control your hearts

Do you love those who fail to love life? What about the abortionist or the legislator who promotes euthanasia? Can you say that you truly love them? Do you pray for them? Saint Paul tells us how we can win the battle for the Gospel of Life, and it's a hard saying: "put on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness, and most of all, love." That is the only way that life is ever going to win.

James 3:13-18 The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace

Ambition, selfishness and ego are the opposite of the humility, love and self-sacrifice which we learn from Christ Jesus upon the altar of the cross. The Gospel of Life is not about what we achieve or get or accomplish. It is about being like Jesus, and being willing to give our lives for the littlest and the least among us.

Gospel Readings

(Lectionary for Mass, no. 890) *Matthew 5:1-12a*

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God

Who is blessed in the kingdom of God? Is it those who make the cover of news magazines? Those who receive a Nobel prize or an Academy Award? Those with big salaries or advanced degrees? No. In the kingdom of God it is the poorest, the littlest, and the most forgotten who are truly blessed. And that's why we work to save their lives.

Matthew 5:38-48 I say to you: offer no resistance to one who is evil

God's way is sometimes very difficult. He knows that it is only human to want revenge. He knows that it is only human to want to be the king of the hill. But Christ, the innocent lamb who was led to the slaughter for the sake of our sins, tells us to love. When they insult you. Love. When they beat you. Love. When they kill.

Love. For it is only the love of Christ, embraced and lived, that can assure the victory of the Gospel of Life in this world.

John 14:23-29 and John 20:19-23 Peace be with you

The week after Easter is the time to contemplate news that is too good to be true – the news the disciples received while locked in the upper room, hiding from death, which they feared would soon overcome them. But suddenly, amidst the darkness and fear of death, Jesus appears in their midst and brings with him the peace which the world cannot give. In a world so often filled with darkness, violence and death, let Jesus into the locked rooms of your heart that he may bring the beauty of the life he has given you, the eternal life which he won for you, and the peace which brings perfect joy in him.

Intercessions for Life

For those deprived of their human needs
and their human rights,
that they may be given the dignity
which God confers on all his people;

We pray to the Lord:

For those who mourn the death of a child,
that they may be given the strength and courage to face the future,
and that we may be given the understanding and
compassion to say the right words in their times of need;

We pray to the Lord:

For all who are forgotten or thrown away,
and especially for the poor, the sick and the aged,
that God might change our hearts
and move us to love them as the image of Christ;

We pray to the Lord:

For every person who suffers from violence,
and especially for women whose pain breaks their hearts,
that through the intercession of she whose
heart was pierced with a sword,
they might know peace and strength;

We pray to the Lord:

For all parents who struggle alone to raise their children,
that God will give them the strength of the children of God
and the support of his holy Church;

We pray to the Lord:

For those condemned to die,
and especially for men and women on death row,
that their plight might move the hearts
of the people of this nation;

We pray to the Lord:

For those who have grown very old,
and especially for those tempted to die,
that God might grant them patient endurance
to do his will and serve his Gospel;

We pray to the Lord:

For young mothers everywhere,
and especially those who are tempted to despair,
that through the child they carry deep within,
they might know hope and joy;

We pray to the Lord:

That the Lord,
who rescues the life of the poor from the power of the wicked,
might send an angel to guard and
protect all unborn children;

We pray to the Lord:

For mothers,
especially those wracked with fear, depression or despair,
that the new life of their child
may touch them with the eternal love of God;

We pray to the Lord:

For the bishops and priests of our Church,
that by their commitment to the innocent child,
the Gospel of Life might be preached
in each of our churches;

We pray to the Lord:

For doctors, nurses and other medical personnel,
especially those tempted by abortion,
That God might change their hearts
and give them the conviction
of the Gospel of Life;

We pray to the Lord:

A NOVENA TO THREE AMERICAN SAINTS FOR LIFE

Saints Elizabeth Seton, Frances Cabrini and John Neumann are powerful witnesses to the Gospel of life, each in their own time. This novena suggests three days of prayer to each of the Saints for the promotion of Life in our country and our Church today.

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Saint Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton, a prominent New York aristocrat, had five children with her husband, William, a shipping merchant. Before she turned 30, the Setons went bankrupt and William died. Within five years of his death, Elizabeth had converted to Catholicism, formed New York city's first charity (the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children), established the first Catholic school and she founded the first religious community of women in the United States of America.

DAY ONE

Saint Elizabeth Seton,
you knew the beauty of all human life
when you carried a child in your womb
and when, as a young widow,
a teacher, and founder of the Sisters of Charity,
you sought to live the Gospel of Life.
Inspire us, intercede for us, and be with us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

You know the sacrament of Holy Matrimony;
Teach us to support all families with faith and truth.

You know the love of a good spouse;
Intercede for all newly married couples.

You know the stirring of the child in your womb;
Intercede for every unborn child.

You know the miracle of giving birth;
Pray for mothers tempted by abortion.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

Glory to the Father ...

DAY TWO

Saint Elizabeth Seton,
you knew the beauty of all human life
when you carried a child in your womb
and when, as a young widow,
a teacher, and founder of the Sisters of Charity,
you sought to live the Gospel of Life.
Inspire us, intercede for us, and be with us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

You know the cry of a little child;
Inspire us to protect the littlest and most vulnerable.

You know the searching of the adolescent;
Open our eyes to the wonder of their lives.

You know the journey of the dying;
Be with us as we journey toward death with those whom we love.

You know the pain of the widow;
Inspire us to seek out those who are most in need.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

Glory to the Father ...

DAY THREE

Saint Elizabeth Seton,
you knew the beauty of all human life
when you carried a child in your womb
and when, as a young widow,
a teacher, and founder of the Sisters of Charity,
you sought to live the Gospel of Life.
Inspire us, intercede for us, and be with us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

You know the loneliness of the orphan;
Consecrate us to the protection of children

You know the vocation of the teacher;
Inspire us to teach the Gospel of Life.

You know the vows of religious life;
Pray that we might be faithful to the Gospel of Life.

Our Father ...
Hail Mary ...
Glory to the Father ...

Saint John Neumann

Saint John Nepimucene Neumann came to the United States as one of 36 priests to serve the 200,000 Catholics of New York and New Jersey in 1836. As a priest in Buffalo, Pittsburgh, and Baltimore, and as Bishop of Philadelphia, he was tireless in his love for the people of the United States. He died in 1860, while on his way to mail a chalice to a missionary priest.

DAY FOUR

Saint John Neumann,
as a loyal son, a faithful priest, and a tireless Bishop,
you worked to support and defend life in all its wonder.
Intercede for the Church you loved with all your heart
that we may be faithful witnesses to the Gospel of Life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Faithful son of faithful parents;
Teach us to honor our parents when they grow old.

Immigrant and stranger;
Inspire us to welcome the rejected of the world.

Protector of the young;
Inspire us to work for the safety of all children.

Our Father ...
Hail Mary ...
Glory to the Father ...

DAY FIVE

Saint John Neumann,
as a loyal son, a faithful priest, and a tireless Bishop,
you worked to support and defend life in all its wonder.
Intercede for the Church you loved with all your heart
that we may be faithful witnesses to the Gospel of Life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Missionary to America;

Pray for the leaders of our country.

Tireless servant of the cross;
Make our hearts to love Christ suffering in those who have
grown very old.

Model of self sacrifice;
Help us not to count the cost in proclaiming the Gospel of Life.

Faithful unto death;
Guide unwed fathers, that they may be true to the Faith.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

Glory to the Father ...

DAY SIX

Saint John Neumann,
as a loyal son, a faithful priest, and a tireless Bishop,
you worked to support and defend life in all its wonder.
Intercede for the Church you loved with all your heart
that we may be faithful witnesses to the Gospel of Life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Preacher of the truth;
Teach our nation to protect the lives of all its citizens.

Friend of the sick;
Inspire doctors to cherish the lives of all.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

Glory to the Father ...

Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini

Frances Cabrini was born in a little village in Lombardy in 1850, so fragile at birth
that she was
brought immediately to Church to be baptized. While from her youth she
dreamed only of being a missionary, she was three times rejected when applying
to a convent. Yet in her years of religious life she founded an order, 70
orphanages, schools and hospitals, scattered over eight countries in Europe
North, South, and Central America.

DAY SEVEN

Saint Frances Cabrini,
In every corner of the hemisphere
you sought out those whom everyone had forgotten.
Mother of immigrants, friend of orphans, protector of the poor,
intercede for us who seek to follow your example.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mother of immigrants;
Give us a love for the lives of all who are rejected or forgotten.

Mother of the oppressed;
Inspire us to work for justice and the protection of all life.

Mother of the lost;
Inspire us to seek out all whose lives are forgotten.

Our Father ...
Hail Mary ...
Glory to the Father ...

DAY EIGHT

Saint Frances Cabrini,
In every corner of the hemisphere
you sought out those whom everyone had forgotten.
Mother of immigrants, friend of orphans, protector of the poor,
intercede for us who seek to follow your example.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mother of the aged;
Be with those who are forgotten and alone.

Mother of the oppressed;
Pray for all who are condemned to die.

Mother of the sick;
Pray for those tempted to forget the infinite value of life.

Our Father ...
Hail Mary ...
Glory to the Father ...

DAY NINE

Saint Frances Cabrini,
In every corner of the hemisphere
you sought out those whom everyone had forgotten.
Mother of immigrants, friend of orphans, protector of the poor,
intercede for us who seek to follow your example.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mother of those who care for the sick;
Inspire doctors to be apostles for life.

Mother of the homeless;
Teach us that all life comes from God and rests only in him.

Mother of little children;
Be with the child who is alone or afraid.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

Glory to the Father ...

A ROSARY FOR LIFE

The Sorrowful Mysteries

The following meditations on the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary are offered as a prayer for all life, from conception to natural death.

The First Sorrowful Mystery

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

Jesus comes with his disciples to the garden of Gethsemane and prays to be delivered from his Passion, but most of all, to do the Father's will. Let us pray that Christ might hear the prayers of all who suffer from the culture of death, and that he might deliver them from the hands of their persecutors.

Our Father ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: hear the cries of innocent children taken from their mothers' wombs and pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: soothe the aching hearts of those afraid to welcome their child.
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: guide the heart of the frightened unwed mother who turns to you.
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: move the hearts of legislators to defend life from conception to natural death.
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: be with us when pain causes us to forget the inherent value of all human life.
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: pray for the children who have forgotten their elderly parents.
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: inspire all priests and deacons to preach the gospel of life.
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: be with those tempted
to take their own lives out of pain or suffering.
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: move the hearts of
those about to abort the life of an innocent child.
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: teach us to love our
life, even in the face of pain or suffering.
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Second Sorrowful Mystery **THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR**

Falsely accused before Pilate, Jesus is cruelly tied to a pillar and scourged, then
clothed in a cloak of purple and mocked. Let us pray for all innocent victims, that
by the merits of his most holy Passion, Christ might deliver them and grant them
eternal life.

Our Father ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: you know the suffering
of the unwed mother. intercede for her.
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: you know the anxiety
of the unwed father
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: you know of the derision
faced by unwed parents
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: you know the joy of
an infant in a mother's arms
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: you know the pride of
a father in his little child
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: you know the sufferings
of immigrants and strangers
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: you know the path of
sorrow for the young widow
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: you know the pain of
the mother of those condemned to die
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: you know the infinite
value of the little child in his mother's womb
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: you know the life of
the woman who is old and sick
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Third Sorrowful Mystery

THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

Pilate mocks the Christ by asking him if he is the King of the Jews. He is the King of all the world, through whom all things were made. He is the one who will judge the living and the dead at the end of time. Yet he is crowned with suffering out of love for us, in reparation for our sins.

Our Father ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: When children are
killed in the womb, pray for us!
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: When old men and
women are killed out of a false sense of mercy, pray for us!
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: When legislators use
government resources to fund abortion, pray for us!
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: When we choose selfishness and death over love and life, pray for us!
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: When children are abused or abandoned, pray for us!
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: When old people are warehoused and forgotten, pray for us!
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: When researchers cause the death of human embryos, pray for us!
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: When we despise and abandon those we condemn to die, pray for us!
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: When the littlest and most innocent are forgotten, pray for us!
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: When we choose expediency over life, pray for us!
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Fourth Sorrowful Mystery

THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS

Three times Christ falls under the weight of the Cross as he carries our sins to Calvary. Let us pray for all who struggle to live the Gospel of Life, that they might pick up their crosses and walk the way of sorrows with the Savior of the world.

Our Father ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: give us the courage to cherish all life despite the cost
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: teach us to cherish

and support all mothers, especially those who suffer for
their children
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: intercede for the
woman who cries from the memory of her abortion
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: be close to all in government
and teach them the beauty of all life
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: inspire us to work for
life, no matter the cost
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: help us to make this
country a land where all are free to live and love
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: move us to love and
support those whom the world has forgotten
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: hear the prayers of
those abandoned in nursing homes because they have
grown old

Hail Mary, full of grace ...
Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: Open our eyes to the
wonder of God's love for us
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: stand beside us whenever
we suffer, and give us the courage to carry our cross
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Fifth Sorrowful Mystery THE CRUCIFIXION

Innocent and without sin, Jesus opens his arms upon the cross out of love for us.
Let us join our sufferings, and the sufferings of the whole world, to his one perfect
sacrifice of praise.

Our Father ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: stand with us by the
cross of your son
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: join your pierced
heart to our sufferings
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: intercede for the innocent
unborn child
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: sustain with your
prayers those who have grown old
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: open our hearts to the
Gospel of Life Jesus preached from the wood of the cross
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: teach us to conform
our sufferings to those of your son
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: be with the mothers of
those condemned to die
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: open our eyes to the
beauty of life in all of its stages
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: give us the courage to
see in the life wracked with pain, the glory of God's creation
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows: pray for us, that we
might proclaim the Gospel of Life.
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Novena for the Feast of The Annunciation

Sign of the Cross

O Mary, Blessed Mother of God,
when the angel greeted you
you were surprised and fearful;
yet, in wonder you listened and
opened your heart to the divine message.

Your life had been ordinary,
like so many of Adam's children,
but your "yes" changed your life
and led to the salvation of us all,
because you invited Christ Our Lord to
grow inside of you.

Mother of Our Savior, help me to open my heart
to the Father's will in my life.
Pray for me to the Lord God as I pray to Him,

O God, prepare my heart for it is hard for me to trust in your will.
Give me clarity of vision, that I may see your way.
Open my ears, that I may hear your words.
Place your hand on my shoulder, that I may feel your guidance.
Enlighten the darkness of my soul, that I may be filled with your light.
Grant me wisdom as I ask (*mention your requests here*).

Generous and loving God,
like your daughter Mary, help me to know and do
your will in this life and in the next.
Grant me a grateful heart and help me to always pray as Mary prayed:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for He has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is His Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory be to the Father
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit
as it was in the beginning,
is now and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

The Annunciation according to the Gospel of Luke (1:26-38)

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. Upon arriving, the angel said to her: "Rejoice, O highly favored daughter! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women." She was deeply troubled by his words, and wondered what his greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her: "Do not fear, Mary. You have found favor with God. You shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name Jesus. Great will be his dignity and he will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over the house of Jacob forever and his reign will be without end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be since I do not know man?" The angel answered her: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; hence, the holy offspring to be born will be called Son of God. ... nothing is impossible with God."

Mary said: "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say."

The Feast of the Annunciation

For centuries, March 25 has been celebrated by Catholics as the "Feast of the Annunciation." Mary's *fiat* – "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say" – brought our Savior into the world.

As the first disciple of Christ, Mary shows us that we must listen to and do God's will. Prayer and action therefore go hand in hand. As followers of Christ we must

make time to talk to and listen to Him in prayer. Examining all that we do, or simply “living” in the light of our prayer, is essential.

Living with a heart open to God’s will has enormous implications. Different people will realize that God calls them to different things. For an adolescent, it may mean resisting peer pressure to take part in drinking or unchaste activity. For the single adult, it could require offering personal time in service of a needy person. A businessman may find that honesty and fairness requires a certain course of action. A married couple could realize that they should have another child. A frightened pregnant woman may understand that she needs to ask for help to resist the temptation to abortion. The sick person might have to accept his illness and join his suffering to that of Christ.

Doing God’s will is not always easy. We usually have our own plans for our lives. It is good to have plans, but never at the expense of our growth in relationship to God. Like Mary, we must trust that God’s will is the best for us and our world. Let us follow the example of Mary and call upon her to help us open our hearts to say “yes” to God.

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