

Respect Life Month

HOMILY CONNECTIONS

October 2024, Year B



Each October, the Catholic Church in the United States celebrates Respect Life Month, and the first Sunday of October is designated as Respect Life Sunday. To support these annual observances, the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities provides materials for parishes to help Catholics understand and value the gift of human life and help build a culture that cherishes and protects it (respectlife.org/respect-life-month).

The following “homily connections” are brief bullet points illustrating connections between the readings for each Sunday in October and the Church’s teachings on the sanctity of human life. As Pope St. John Paul II said in *Evangelium vitae*, “The Gospel of life is at the heart of Jesus’ message. ... The Gospel of God’s love for man, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of life are a single and indivisible Gospel.”¹

**Please note that every homily that mentions or alludes to abortion should include the message that there is hope and healing after involvement with an abortion. (For more information, please see [“Homily Considerations for Healing after Abortion.”](#))*

Additional resources for clergy and ideas for using them can be found at respectlife.org/priests-and-deacons.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2024:

🔗 [Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time \(Respect Life Sunday\)](#)

Readings (Lectionary: 140) • • • • •

- **First Reading: Gn 2:18-24**
The LORD God said: “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him.”
- **Responsorial Psalm: Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6**
*May the Lord bless us all the days of our lives.
May you see your children’s children.*
- **Second Reading: Heb 2:9-11**
He “for a little while” was made “lower than the angels,” that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.
- **Gospel Acclamation: 1 Jn 4:12**
If we love one another, God remains in us and his love is brought to perfection in us.
- **Gospel: Mk 10:2-16 or 10:2-12**
“Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

Connection Points

**Please note that every homily that mentions or alludes to abortion should include the message that there is hope and healing after involvement with an abortion. (For more information, please see "[Homily Considerations for Healing after Abortion.](#)")*

- **First and Second Reading:** Experiencing suffering—or watching another suffer—is one of the most difficult human experiences. But we are not alone. Christ experienced suffering more deeply than we can comprehend, and our own suffering can be meaningful when we unite it with his. An elderly man whose health is quickly deteriorating; a mother facing terminal cancer—each may have great difficulties and need assistance, but each of their lives is a good and perfect gift. Jesus is with us every step of the way, giving us the grace we need. God calls us to embrace the lives we have been given, and the lives of others, for as long as they are given. Every life is worth living.
- **Responsorial Psalm:** No sin is unforgiveable, including the taking of human life. No one is beyond redemption. We have all failed and we are all in need of God’s mercy. It is for this very reason that Christ suffered, died, and rose again. Jesus came to offer us his infinite love and mercy, and we can receive it in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. (See also: [Homily Considerations for Healing after Abortion.](#))
- **Gospel Acclamation / Gospel:** Jesus came to serve and calls us to do the same. Many need support in choosing life or in finding healing after participating in abortion. How can we serve them? For example:
 - If a woman shares she had an abortion, listen patiently, thank her for trusting you, and express your sympathy for her loss. Assure her of God’s unconditional love and encourage her to seek healing. If appropriate, and you think she might welcome it, assure her of God’s desire to forgive and encourage her to seek his forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You can also explain that the U.S. Catholic Church’s Project Rachel Ministry for healing after abortion offers confidential, compassionate help (www.HopeAfterAbortion.org). (See also: [How to Talk to a Friend Who’s Had an Abortion & Bridges of Mercy for Healing after Abortion.](#))
 - Amanda (name changed for privacy) was estranged from her husband, had a 12-year-old son, and was pregnant. When she called the Gabriel Project for help, she had just lost her job and her health insurance because she could not do the heavy lifting required of a nurse’s aide. Amanda had a part-time job that allowed her to pay her half of the rent, since her husband would only pay his half. And then the eviction notice arrived, and Amanda found out that her husband had not been paying his half of the rent. Amanda, her unborn child, and her 12-year-old son would soon be homeless. When Amanda called for help, the parish volunteers connected her with legal help to block the eviction, and raised funds to show the landlord that she was making headway in paying the back rent. Other parishioners provided furniture and baby items and, more importantly, friendship and moral support. Thanks to the help, Amanda now has a beautiful daughter, has a new apartment with her children, has the furniture and baby items that she needs, and has returned to her job.



not alone. The message to the blind man is for us and to share with others: “Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you.” Example:

- **Melissa, a North Carolina mom**³ with young children and a busy job, attended a parish informational session for **Walking with Moms in Need**, thinking she might help out here and there. But she felt the Lord’s call and “by the end of the session she had volunteered to be the ministry’s coordinator.” Her parish now holds “Hand Up Days” once a month during which families can “shop” free of charge for baby and toddler items they need that have been donated by parishioners.
- Melissa shared some powerful words of encouragement: “I think for too long we have been comfortable leaving the work of accompanying women in crisis situations—pregnant or parenting—to others in the nonprofit and government sectors. It is very clear in the Gospel that this is our job - all of us! A woman in a pregnancy center once told me that most women considering abortion are wrestling with a financial matter less than \$250 and that has really stuck with me. If we can lighten the burden just a little, what a difference we can make—it is literally life or death.”



1 Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, nos. 1, 2.

2 Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 28.

3 Elizabeth Ascik, “One of the Best Ways to Walk with Moms in Need,” *Aleteia*, March 23, 2023, <https://aleteia.org/2023/03/22/one-of-the-best-ways-to-walk-with-moms-in-need/>.

Models used for illustrative purposes only. Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All rights reserved. Excerpts from *Evangelium vitae (The Gospel of Life)*, © 1995. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Used with permission. All rights reserved. Copyright © 2024, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities | usccb.org/prolife