



WORD OF LIFE

January 2009

Intercessions for Life

JANUARY 2009

Jan 1st

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

For all mothers who will give birth today:
that their love and care
will inspire all people to a deeper appreciation
of the beauty of life;
We pray to the Lord:

Jan 4th

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

That as a star guided the wise men to the author of life,
the Church might be the light in the darkness of a culture of death;
We pray to the Lord:

Jan 11th

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

For every little child:
that as we celebrate the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan,
they might be led through the waters of Baptism
to a life of holiness and love through him;
We pray to the Lord:

Jan 18th

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

For our new President and all Members of Congress:
that a respect for the life of every human being
might be foremost in all their decisions;
We pray to the Lord:

Jan 22nd

A DAY OF PRAYER AND PENANCE FOR LIFE

For all who are wounded by the sin of abortion:
for the child, the parent, the doctor
and all who have abetted this sin,
for repentance, mercy, and peace;
We pray to the Lord:

Jan 25th

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

For medical researchers:
that their work might be inspired by a love for the truth
and a respect for each human person;
We pray to the Lord:

The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) would “outlaw any ‘interference’ in providing abortion at will. It would deprive the American people in all fifty states of the freedom they now have to enact modest restraints and regulations on the abortion industry. FOCA would coerce all Americans into subsidizing and promoting abortion with their tax dollars. It would counteract any and all sincere efforts by government and others of good will to reduce the number of abortions in our country.”

Statement by USCCB President Cardinal Francis George on behalf of the USCCB, Nov. 12, 2008

“Parental notification and informed consent precautions would be outlawed [under FOCA], as would be laws banning procedures such as partial-birth abortion and protecting infants born alive after a failed abortion. Abortion clinics would be deregulated. The Hyde Amendment restricting the federal funding of abortions would be abrogated. FOCA would have lethal consequences for prenatal human life.”

Statement by USCCB President Cardinal Francis George on behalf of the USCCB, Nov. 12, 2008

“FOCA would have ... [a] destructive effect on the freedom of conscience of doctors, nurses and health care workers whose personal convictions do not permit them to cooperate in the private killing of unborn children. It would threaten Catholic health care institutions and Catholic Charities. It would be an evil law that would further divide our country, and the Church should be intent on opposing evil.”

Statement by USCCB President Cardinal Francis George on behalf of the USCCB, Nov. 12, 2008

“If the election is misinterpreted ideologically as a referendum on abortion, the unity desired by President-elect Obama and all Americans at this moment of crisis will be impossible to achieve. Abortion kills not only unborn children; it destroys constitutional order and the common good, which is assured only when the life of every human being is legally protected. Aggressively pro-abortion policies, legislation and executive orders will permanently alienate tens of millions of Americans, and would be seen by many as an attack on the free exercise of their religion.”

Statement by USCCB President Cardinal Francis George on behalf of the USCCB, Nov. 12, 2008

A Day of Prayer and Penance for Life

January 22, 2009

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

The readings for today may be taken from the Mass for Peace and Justice. The following homily notes are based on the second option for the first reading (Isaiah 32:15-18), the third option for the second reading (James 3: 13-18) and the fourth option for the Gospel (John 20:19-23).

God wants us to live in paradise. But in the years since abortion on demand has been made available in the United States of America, we have become a desert of virtue. Like the desert the Prophet Isaiah describes today, the culture of death in our country makes it a dry and parched land, without life and without hope.

Yet through Isaiah, the Lord promises to send forth his Spirit, who when poured out on the desert will cause it to bloom like an orchard. It will bloom with justice and peace, calm and security for all. Even the child in her mother’s womb, or the old person on the verge of death, or the prisoner on death row will have hope. For “my people will live in peaceful country, in secure dwellings and quiet resting places.”

The upper room where the disciples gathered after the death of Jesus upon the cross was also a sort of desert. The room was locked for fear of those who had killed Jesus. The air was thick with fear and the smell of death. But Jesus entered the room and breathed on them, saying “Peace be with you.” This is the peace the world cannot give. It is the same breath, the same spirit of God which brings life to the desert.

Whenever we are faced with the culture of death, we must pray to God for the gift of this Spirit, whose fruits are justice and peace. That, in fact is what the prayers at today’s Mass pray for: Justice and Peace. Justice for the child killed in his mother’s womb, peace for the victim of violent abuse, justice for the doctor and his colleagues who profit from the death of children, peace for the mother who repents of her long ago abortion. Justice for the innocent victim whose life no longer seems important to anyone, and peace for the man who sits and waits for death each day in a prison not too far away from us.

We pray for the gift of this spirit of peace and justice. According to Saint James we can also work for this gift by living a good life seeking to be humble and wise. We must put aside all bitter jealousy and selfish ambition, seeking to be “pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity.” Only then will our lives proclaim the Gospel of Life. Only then will the Spirit of God renew the face of the earth.