



# *WORD OF LIFE*

*October 2008*

# Respect Life Sunday October 5, 2008

## TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Is 5:1-7/Phil 4:6-9/Mt 21:33-43 (LEFM, no. 139)

### Preaching for Life

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Sometimes our country seems like a vineyard which has gone to seed. Where once fertile hillsides and rich vines grew, we find nothing but wild grapes. Our country was founded on the belief that God had granted an inalienable right to life to every human being. Yet the easy accessibility of abortion on demand, our lack of concern for the elderly and those most vulnerable seem to be signs of a nation gone astray.

Such was the condition of Jerusalem in the time of the prophet Isaiah, when God asks them what he has done to deserve this sad state of affairs, and threatens to let the thorns and the briars take over this wild vineyard, where he looks for justice and sees only bloodshed.

Today's Gospel completes the analogy. Jesus tells the story of "the landowner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went on a journey." Of course, the tenants neglect the vineyard, but worse, when the landlord sends his servants and then his son to inspect the vineyard, the tenants kill his emissaries. "What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes?" Jesus asks his disciples. It does not take a scripture scholar to figure out that they will be punished for their mismanagement of the talents which God has given them.

This is the reason why there is an urgency to the pro-life movement today. For there are doctors who have been given the gift of compassion and healing who have used their talents to abort babies. There are counselors who have been given the compassion to help those in distress, who urge people to choose to abort their child. There are parents to whom God has given the power to create life with him, who advise their pregnant daughter to get an abortion. There are caregivers for the elderly who refuse to respect their human dignity, and there are men and women in all sectors of society who refuse to use their talents for the promotion of the Gospel of Life.

In his letter to the Philippians today, Saint Paul gives us good counsel on how to promote the Gospel of Life. He advises that "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." May we commit ourselves to the protection of all human life from conception to natural death that this nation may, once again, be a land known for its honor and its love of the truth, guided by the God in whom we trust.

## Intercessions for Life

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For our president and all members of Congress:  
that a respect for the life of every citizen  
might be foremost in all their decisions;  
We pray to the Lord:

For those condemned to die:  
that God might teach us how to love them;  
We pray to the Lord:

For all who are sick:  
that the example of their suffering  
might bring us closer to the cross of Jesus;  
We pray to the Lord:

For all leaders of our state and local governments:  
that they might honor the Gospel of Life  
in all their deliberations;  
We pray to the Lord:

For all children who are profoundly disabled:  
that we might cherish and nurture them;  
We pray to the Lord:

For parents tempted by fear or despair:  
that God might show them the way;  
We pray to the Lord:

For all who have grown very old:  
that we might honor their wisdom;  
We pray to the Lord:

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:

For all seminarians:  
that their study of the sacred sciences  
might bring them to a love for the Gospel of Life;  
We pray to the Lord:

For all medical students:  
that their study of the wonder of the human body  
might lead them to love the creator of all human life;  
We pray to the Lord:

# Intercessions for Life

October 2008

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**October 5th      TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

For every child who lives in his mother's womb:  
that he will be loved and cherished;  
We pray to the Lord:

**October 12<sup>th</sup>      TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

For all who work to defend life:  
that God might reward them for their goodness;  
We pray to the Lord:

**October 19<sup>th</sup>      TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

For all members of our Supreme Court:  
that a respect for our inalienable right to life  
might guide them in all their decisions;  
We pray to the Lord:

**October 26<sup>th</sup>      THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

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

Do we recognize that the innate dignity of every individual rests on his or her deepest identity - as image of the Creator - and therefore that human rights are universal, based on the natural law, and not something dependent upon negotiation or patronage, let alone compromise? And so we are led to reflect on what place the poor and the elderly, immigrants and the voiceless, have in our societies. How can it be that domestic violence torments so many mothers and children? How can it be that the most wondrous and sacred human space - the womb - has become a place of unutterable violence?"

- Pope Benedict XVI, Welcome Celebration by the Young People at Barangaroo, Sydney, July 17, 2008

God's creation is one and it is good. The concerns for non-violence, sustainable development, justice and peace, and care for our environment are of vital importance for humanity. They cannot, however, be understood apart from a profound reflection upon the innate dignity of every human life from conception to natural death: a dignity conferred by God himself and thus inviolable.

- Pope Benedict XVI, Welcome Celebration by the Young People at Barangaroo, Sydney, July 17, 2008

May we encourage everyone – especially the young – to marvel at the beauty of life, to seek its ultimate meaning, and to strive to realize its sublime potential!

-Pope Benedict XVI, Meeting with Representatives of Other Religions, St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, July 18, 2008

Faith teaches us that we are God's creatures, made in his image and likeness, endowed with an inviolable dignity, and called to eternal life. Wherever man is diminished, the world around us is also diminished; it loses its ultimate meaning and strays from its goal. What emerges is a culture, not of life, but of death. How could this be considered "progress"? It is a backward step, a form of regression which ultimately dries up the very sources of life for individuals and all of society.

-Pope Benedict XVI, Homily at Mass at Saint Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, July 19, 2008