



DAY NINE

INTERCESSION

May civic leaders work for the protection of all human life, in every stage and circumstance.

PRAYERS

Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be

REFLECTION

The Declaration of Independence boldly affirms that first among our inalienable rights is the right to life, given to us by the Creator. Yet despite being so solemnly proclaimed, the right to life is today threatened and often denied, particularly at the moments when life is most fragile. Our laws should—first and foremost—protect life. But “our highest Court does not recognize children in their mothers’ wombs as persons and claims that abortion is a constitutional right. Further, many political leaders work actively to increase access to abortion. Some falsely describe it as health care and even as a basic human right” (*Priorities at the Polls*). Laws and policies that legalize or promote an intrinsic evil like abortion violate the virtue of justice.

Those who work as public officials and civic leaders have a duty to serve the common good, and therefore have a profound obligation to safeguard this most fundamental right to life. Through our own prayer, witness, and civic participation, we can encourage our leaders to truly answer their call to protect the rights of all people. For “there can be no true democracy without a recognition of every person’s dignity and without respect for his or her rights” (*Evangelium vitae* 101).

Image: A mosaic of Our Lady of Guadalupe decorates a side altar in the Church of Santa Maria della Famiglia at the Vatican. Dec. 15. (CNS photo/Paul Haring.) *Evangelium vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*), no. 101 © 1995, Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Used with permission. All rights reserved. Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann, *Priorities at the Polls*, Washington, DC: USCCB, 2020. *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States*, Introductory Letter, p. 6. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2020. Copyright © 2021, USCCB, Washington, DC. All rights reserved.

ACTS OF REPARATION (choose one)

- Sacrifice some of your free time to do a small act of service, such as making breakfast for a family member, writing a note of encouragement to a coworker, or praying for the intentions of a friend.
- Sometimes restrictions on religious freedom constrain our efforts to live out the Gospel of life. We must be free to live out our Catholic faith in the public square. Offer this Prayer for Religious Liberty, that Christians may always be free to respect, protect, and defend human life: usccb.org/prayer-for-religious-liberty.
- Offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for today’s intention.

ONE STEP FURTHER

When discussing faithful citizenship in 2019, the U.S. bishops reaffirmed, “the threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed.” Archbishop Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas and former Chair of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities, explains more in *Priorities at the Polls*: respectlife.org/priorities-at-the-polls.

