

New Evangelization and Family Life suggested activities
January, 2015

Monthly Theme: Evangelization through the respect for life and family

All people are created in the image and likeness of God. Consistent respect for the gift of life from God (from conception to natural death) is a hallmark of Catholic belief and practice. January 22 marks the anniversary of the 1973 Supreme Court decision *Roe v Wade*, a direct contradiction of the church's teaching.

Prayer for an Expectant Mother

Lord God,
Creator of the human race,
your Son, through the working of the Holy Spirit,
was born of a woman,
so that he might pay the age-old debt of sin
and save us by his redemption.

Receive with kindness the prayer of your servant
as she asks for the birth of a healthy child.
Grant that she may safely deliver a son or a daughter
to be numbered among your family,
to serve you in all things,
and to gain eternal life. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Prayer for Expectant Parents

Gracious Father,
your Word, spoken in love, created the human family
and, in the fullness of time,
your son, conceived in love, restored it to your friendship.
Hear the prayers of N. and N.,
Who await the birth of their child.
Calm their fears when they are anxious.
Watch over and support these parents
and bring their child into this world
safely and in good health,
so that as members of your family
they may praise you and glorify you
through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
now and forever.
R: Amen.

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Green Plant Presentation (thanks to St. Michael Parish in Chapman)

When a parish leader is told (or finds out) of someone expecting a baby, the leader visits with the expectant mother about a green plant being designated as a symbol of the expected birth. The leader explains that this designation will be announced in the bulletin but only when she (or family) wants it to be announced.

When it is announced, a green plant with a name placard is placed on the Blessed Virgin Mary altar (option: some other suitable place in church). It is kept there until the baby is baptized. At the Baptism, the plant is presented to the family. The "Prayer for Expectant Parents" or "The Prayer for and

Expectant Mother” could be copied off onto card stock (or regular copy paper) and made available near the plant for parishioners to pray during the time of pregnancy.

The announcement is: A Celebration of Life! A new life is coming into the family of _____ . A plant will be (is) placed on the Blessed Virgin Mary altar as a reminder to pray for the expectant mother (or parents) and baby in their journey before birth. The plant is presented to the family at the baby's baptism.

Prayer for Singles (see following document)

Father, thank you for blessing the Church with committed disciples. It is a joy to serve beside such wonderful people, and you have made it so by calling us all together in a community of faith.

Today I especially entrust to you my brothers or sisters who are single, adult disciples.

I pray for those who would like to find a spouse, but who struggle to do so. Give them strength to press on in patience, even when they feel lonely or that they are not desirable.

I pray for those who have no desire to marry. They are strong, but have to undergo the many references to marriage and children, knowing all the while they do not have that desire for their own lives. Forgive us when we fail to utilize their gifts in our planning and work.

I pray for those who are “single again.” Some are hurting, because the person they thought was that “special someone” is still alive, but has walked out, leaving feelings of loneliness, hurt, and abandonment, adding more pressures in this life than they should have to bear. Help us to shoulder those burdens with them, and to show Christ in our attitude of compassion.

I pray also for those who grieve, because the man or woman they spent years—or even decades—with has passed from this life. They have so much wisdom from experiences, both good and difficult. May we use their wisdom, while giving them the care and compassion they so much deserve. Father, thank you for these amazing men and women who show faithfulness through grief.

Lord, help the Church to be a place where those who are single always feel important, and where they can use their time, talent, and treasure to help your Kingdom grow.

Teach us, Lord, what to say—and what not to say—so that our single brothers and sisters feel close and comforted by our words as we all seek to serve you together.

Again, Lord, thank you for the family that is the Church and for every member, no matter their stage in life. And thank you for giving them each a place at your altar of praise.

We pray all this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and brother forever. Amen.