

PRAY: Week #1—Respect Life Sunday

Respect Life Sunday Homily Helps

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Luke 17:5–10)—October 4th and 5th

- **“Increase our faith” (Lk 17:5):**

The disciples ask for more faith because they know discipleship is demanding. To defend life—from the unborn to the elderly, from the poor to the imprisoned—requires the kind of faith that trusts God can work through even our small efforts (mustard seed faith).

- **Mustard seed faith uproots what seems immovable (Lk 17:6):**

In a culture of death, it may feel like our voice for life is too small. Yet Christ assures us that even a little faith can move mountains—or uproot entrenched mentalities that devalue life. *Evangelium Vitae* calls us to resist discouragement by noticing the “positive signs” of a culture of life already growing.

- **Servants of the Gospel of Life (Lk 17:7–10):**

Jesus reminds us that discipleship is not about applause but obedience. We don’t defend life for praise or recognition but because it is our duty as followers of Christ. As *Gaudium et Spes* insists, every person must treat their neighbor as “another self,” especially the vulnerable.

- **Faith as humble service:**

Respect Life Sunday reminds us that serving life is not an optional extra—it’s core to the Gospel. Pope Francis says, “*Our defense of the innocent unborn needs to be clear, firm, and passionate... Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor... the infirm and elderly... the victims of human trafficking.*” To serve life is to serve Christ himself (cf. Mt 25:40).

- **Duty rooted in love, not ideology:**

Jesus calls us “unprofitable servants” who have “done what we were obliged to do” (Lk 17:10). Respecting life is not a political stance or a special interest—it’s simply living our Catholic identity. As St. John Paul II writes: “*Respect, protect, love, and serve life, every human life!*”

Possible Preaching Hooks

- Tell a story of someone whose “mustard seed” act for life (adoption, advocacy, caring for the sick, walking with a mother in crisis) bore fruit beyond what they imagined.
- Invite the congregation to see their *ordinary* faithfulness—praying, volunteering, accompanying—as powerful “seeds” in God’s hands.
- Stress that on Respect Life Sunday we don’t congratulate ourselves; we recommit ourselves humbly, as servants, to the Gospel of Life.

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Sample Petitions for Prayers of the Faithful

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For Pope Leo XIV and those in leadership in the Church, as they work to end the culture of death and promote a culture of life. Give them strength as they work to end all that which threatens the God-given dignity of human life. *We pray to the Lord...*

For all Catholics: that on this Respect Life Sunday, the Lord will strengthen our resolve to protect the gift of every human life; *let us pray to the Lord:*

May the Lord help us to understand more deeply the challenges of pregnant and parenting moms and to respond with increased care and support; *We pray to the Lord:*

For women and men suffering after participating in an abortion: may the Church's abortion healing ministry, help them find peace and healing through God's endless mercy; *let us pray to the Lord:*