

Reminders and Resources for the winter 2024 Homily Series:

Life-Giving Choices
Week One — Consistency

If we are to be *for life*, then we need to look at the choices we make to see if they are truly life-giving. Jesus is our role model for how to be consistent in making life-giving choices. He valued life steadily, embracing all classes and categories.

Life-giving choices are about faith, not politics. No political party is consistent. When it comes to faith, there are no sides. We are charged with protecting and defending ALL of life. The faith we profess *will* inform our participation in society.

Scripture Connections:

We hear in Scripture to repent and make changes. **In the first reading** God provides a warning through Jonah to the city of Nineveh. **In the second reading** Paul reminds us to live as though God could come for us any day. Repeatedly throughout scriptures we are reminded to reorient ourselves on what really matters and to believe. These are the first life-giving choices we can make on our faith journey. **In the Gospel** Jesus invites four people to join his mission and they leave behind the familiar to follow him.

Three reasons consistency matters:

NOTE: The quoted material below comes from Cardinal Cupich's speech entitled, "The Bond of Perfection: From a Consistent Ethic of Life to an Integral Ethic of Solidarity." This speech was based on Cardinal Bernardin's teaching 40 years ago and the rich tradition of Catholic Social Teaching.

1. Every life matters

- "...the loss of even one human life is a momentous event... abortion, nuclear war, poverty, euthanasia, and capital punishment all share a common identity in their denial of the right to life. That commonality calls for consistency." (Cupich)
- As people of faith, we need to get curious and explore these issues to understand their impact. We need to seek to make life-giving choices to address them.
- We have a responsibility to uphold the value of life, to respond to the systems that need reform, and to involve ourselves in the healing process with one another.

2. All threats to life are interrelated

- "...all threats to human dignity are intertwined, not simply by logical consistency, but by reality itself, as diverse threats to life tend to reinforce one another." (Cupich)
- There are "a whole range of moral issues, each distinctively urgent, but all inextricably linked by the fundamental value of human life. (Cupich)
- The good news is that the Church isn't just you/me, it's a WE. We are in this together. We can and must work as a team if we are to address the numerous threats.

3. Empathy is necessary

- "...An effective ethic of solidarity must be animated by the virtue of compassion, or empathy... human suffering unites the issues... because core elements of human dignity are under attack." (Cupich)

- The bridge that connects two opposing views is empathy. Empathy can lead us beyond our “comfort zones to embrace human suffering in ‘the other camp.’”(Cupich)
- What we need “is a spirit that puts God in the very center of life... a spirit that prompts us to love our neighbor... When this is done, not only do we reconcile ourselves with God, but we also reconcile ourselves with our brothers and sisters.” (Cupich)

Learn from Jesus:

Jesus stood up against violence, fed the hungry, comforted the dying, and forgave the sins of others. He advocated for the healing of others both in body and spirit, and stood up for the powerless. Jesus consistently loved those who society would throw away. He taught us redemption is **life-giving** — it’s *giving life back* to a person or situation.

Questions for Contemplation and Sharing:

1. What life issues do I NOT know much about and why?
2. How do I feel about advocating for a policy that could reduce a threat to life?
3. In what way could I get out of my comfort zone to empathize with an opposite view?

Prayer: Show Us Your Face

(Found at <https://www.usccb.org/prayers/show-us-your-face>; slightly modified here.)

Creator of All, Show us your face reflected in the faces of our brothers and sisters, especially the least, the most vulnerable, the defenseless, and those in need. In refugee families fleeing violence or war, show us your face. In those suffering from hunger, show us your face. In children not yet born, show us your face. In those enslaved by drug addiction, show us your face. In parents who work two jobs but still struggle to get by, show us your face. In those on death row, show us your face. In young immigrants brought to the U.S. as children, show us your face. In those aging and alone, show us your face. In all faces, we know that your divine image is reflected. Help us to recognize always that image. Help us to work together to protect the dignity of all people — each one created in your image. Lord, in our families, communities and world guide us toward consistency, that our choices may be life-giving. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Resources:

- The Bond of Perfection: From a Consistent Ethic of Life to an Integral Ethic of Solidarity — by Cardinal Cupich: <https://www.osservatoreromano.va/en/news/2023-09/ing-039/the-bond-of-perfection-from-a-consistent-ethic-of-life-to-an-int.html>
- Outreach and Social Justice ministries of STA — opportunities for life-giving choices: <https://www.stapostle.org/ministries/outreach-social-justice-ministries/>
- Respect Life — building a culture that cherishes and protects every human life: <https://www.respectlife.org/>
- Exodus World Service — helping refugees: <https://exodusworldservice.org/>
- Article about the rise in US maternal death rate — by Jacqueline Howard: <https://www.cnn.com/2023/03/16/health/maternal-deaths-increasing-nchs/index.html>
- The Century Foundation — conducts research and drives policy change regarding economic, racial, gender, and disability equity: <https://tcf.org/>