



# DAY ONE

January 16, 2016

## Intercession

For the conversion of all hearts and the end to abortion.

## Prayers

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## Reflection

Today's Gospel reading (Mk 2:13-17) recounts Jesus dining with tax collectors and sinners. When the Pharisees question Jesus about this, he responds, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners." In a society where millions of people have fallen prey to the false promises of the culture of death, let us witness to the mercy of Jesus and invite all who've been wounded to experience his abundant love and healing.

## Acts of Reparation (choose one)

- Go to an abortion clinic and pray, or set aside an hour today to pray for those who are struggling with a decision of life or death for their unborn child.
- Spend some time reflecting upon today's Gospel passage.
- Use Facebook or another form of social media to post something that builds up the culture of life.

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## One Step Further

Pope Saint John Paul II described the "culture of life" as "the fruit of the culture of truth and of love" in his encyclical *The Gospel of Life* (no. 77). Do we build up the culture of life by living in truth and in love? Are we the kind of people whom a woman could and would come to if she found out she were pregnant and needed loving support and encouragement?

If a woman did come to you after becoming unexpectedly pregnant in difficult circumstances, would you know how to support her? "10 Ways to Support Her When She's Unexpectedly Expecting" ([www.goo.gl/cX06ol](http://www.goo.gl/cX06ol))\* provides simple, concrete tips on how to provide loving, life-affirming support for a friend who is unexpectedly pregnant.



\*Full URL: <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/2015/10-ways-to-support-her-when-shes-unexpectedly-expecting.cfm>

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)



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# DAY TWO

January 17, 2016

## Intercession

May those near the end of their lives receive medical care that respects their dignity and protects their lives.

## Prayers

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## Reflection

When Maggie's active father suffered an accident that eventually led to his passing, Maggie's conversations with him turned to life's more serious topics, and his final days became a time that was cherished by the whole family. During this time, Maggie's dad taught her that "dignity can't be diminished by pain or loss of personal control," that "Jesus was walking along with him," and that "our suffering is not meaningless when we unite it with Christ's own suffering."

As a 50-year-old wife and mother of three, Maggie needed this message in a dramatically new way when she was diagnosed with a terminal illness. Instead of giving up hope, she embraced the legacy her father had left her, cherishing the life she still had left: "[M]y life is, always has been, and always will be, worth living." Read more about her experience in "Maggie's Story: Living like Dad" ([www.goo.gl/QuLz1P](http://www.goo.gl/QuLz1P)).\*

## Acts of Reparation (choose one)

- Take time to write a handwritten note to someone who is lonely or needing encouragement.
- Read about the life of a modern (19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century) saint. You might be surprised by how much you have in common with them.
- Go to bed a little early tonight, and spend some time talking and listening to God.

## One Step Further

Meet Maggie in the brief, 3-minute video (available at [www.goo.gl/4HM8Ib](http://www.goo.gl/4HM8Ib))\* that inspired the article, "Maggie's Story: Living like Dad" ([www.goo.gl/QuLz1P](http://www.goo.gl/QuLz1P)).\*

*"I saw with my own two eyes what joy can be found in just valuing every moment. ... [My dad] left us a legacy of that time that he gave us. He could have checked out right away and said, 'I'm done with this.' But he didn't. He stuck around, and he said, 'I'm here for you.'"*

– "Maggie's Story" (video)



\*Full URL for article: <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/2015/maggies-story-living-like-dad.cfm>

\*Full URL for video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJwWKDGBS5o>

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# DAY THREE

January 18, 2016

## Intercession

May those who long for a child of their own be filled with trust in God's loving plan.

## Prayers

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## Reflection

It can be very difficult and painful when the Lord doesn't answer our prayers the way we hope. We may have many doubts and questions, wondering why we face the challenges that we do. Yet even though our suffering is often shrouded in a sense of mystery, we believe that the Lord loves us with great tenderness and compassion that is beyond our imagination. Knowing this, we can trust that "all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28).

## Acts of Reparation (choose one)

- Smile. Ask God today for the grace to be extra joyful, and share your love for Christ with those who need that encouragement the most today.
- Today, pray the Rosary, or even just a decade, for someone who has hurt or disappointed you, and ask for the grace to forgive that person.
- We can sometimes forget how blessed we are to have many of our daily comforts. Give up sleeping with your pillow tonight.

## One Step Further

The article on infertility on the USCCB's For Your Marriage website ([www.goo.gl/Jdmuy3](http://www.goo.gl/Jdmuy3)),\* addresses the topic sensitively and gives practical guidance for married couples who are walking on this road. Although geared to such couples, the article is also helpful for anyone to read, offering insight into the experience of infertility and giving awareness of the need for sensitivity in our relationships with those who may be affected.



\*Full URL:

[www.foryourmarriage.org/everymarriage/overcoming-obstacles/infertility/](http://www.foryourmarriage.org/everymarriage/overcoming-obstacles/infertility/)

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# DAY FOUR

## January 19, 2016

### Intercession

May children awaiting adoption be welcomed into loving families.

### Prayers

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

### Reflection

The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us to “hold fast to the hope that lies before us. This we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm” (Heb 6:18-19). We pray that children awaiting adoption would be filled with the hope of Christ and “the peace of God that surpasses all understanding” (Phil 4:7). We also remember that we too can cling fast to this anchor of hope, for we have received “a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, ‘Abba, Father!’” (Rom 8:15). May our loving Father envelop each of us in his love today and open our eyes in faith, that we may see and rejoice in his love.

### Acts of Reparation (choose one)

- Make an act of faith, hope or love. ([www.goo.gl/QiIqQW](http://www.goo.gl/QiIqQW))
- Today, ignore your sweet tooth. Make healthy eating choices.
- Make a “quiet hour” today, turning off all electronic devices (cell phone, iPod, computer, television, radio, video game system), and retreat to your room. Spend some time in prayer or prayerful reading.

### One Step Further

In “An Adoption Love Story,” Jenny\* shares her and her husband’s story of adopting their son, Andrew. Read about some of the challenges, concerns, and joys on their journey at [www.goo.gl/S5OxL7](http://www.goo.gl/S5OxL7).\*

\*Names changed for privacy.

Full URL: <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/2014/an-adoption-love-story.cfm>



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# DAY FIVE

January 20, 2016

## Intercession

For an end to the use of the death penalty in our country.

## Prayers

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## Reflection

As Catholics, we believe and put our hope in a merciful and loving God. We are conscious of our own brokenness and need for redemption. Our Lord calls us to imitate him more perfectly by witnessing to the inherent dignity of every person, including those whose actions have been despicable. Our faith and hope is in the mercy of God who says to us, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy” (Mt 5:7) and “I desire mercy, not sacrifice” (Mt 9:13). As Christians we are called to oppose the culture of death by witnessing to something greater and more perfect: a gospel of life, hope and mercy.

## Acts of Reparation (choose one)

- Clean a room in your house without being asked or without telling anyone. Pray for your family members while you clean, “[a]nd your Father who sees in secret will repay you” (Matthew 6:6).
- Read about a Church teaching you don’t understand in the Catechism ([www.google.com/cu4OBs](http://www.google.com/cu4OBs)).
- Make an honest assessment of your “giving finances” — are you giving too little? Make a resolution to give a set weekly or monthly donation to your parish or favorite local charity.

## One Step Further

For some people who are committed to upholding the sanctity of human life, the death penalty can present a challenge. Properly understood, however, Catholic teaching against the death penalty is both persuasive and eminently pro-life. Find out why in “Life Matters: A Catholic Response to the Death Penalty” at [www.google.com/OIEb7P](http://www.google.com/OIEb7P).\*

\*Full URL: <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/2013/life-matters-a-catholic-response-to-the-death-penalty.cfm>



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# DAY SIX

January 21, 2016

## Intercession

May all people reject pornography and discover the true meaning of love through an encounter and relationship with Christ.

## Prayers

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## Reflection

Today we honor the life of St. Agnes, a 12 or 13-year-old girl martyred in Rome in 304 AD. Agnes never wavered in her commitment to remain a virgin and to give her whole life to the Lord, refusing proposals to marry. Her innocence and heroism facing death helped bring an end to the persecutions of Christians in Rome. Following the example of St. Agnes, let us remain steadfast in recognizing Christ, who is Love Incarnate, as the source and summit of our lives. May his love give us the determination and courage to live for him and for others, especially the most vulnerable among us. St. Agnes, pray for us!

## Acts of Reparation (choose one)

- Don't push the snooze button. Get right out of bed and offer your day in prayer to God.
- Fast from snacking today. Eat three meals only.
- It's easy to put our headphones on and ignore our siblings or parents. Instead, enjoy the opportunity you have to talk to them; ask them how they are doing.

## One Step Further

We are created with a desire to love and be loved. We long to be known, understood, and accepted for who we are. Pornography, in contrast, distracts us from our call to love. Learn more about the spiritual, emotional, and neurological impact of pornography in *Life Matters: Pornography and Our Call to Love*" ([www.goo.gl/TkTpTV](http://www.goo.gl/TkTpTV)).\*

\*Full URL: <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/2012/life-matters-pornography-and-our-call-to-love.cfm>



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## Intercession

May each person suffering from the loss of a child through abortion find hope & healing in Christ.

## Prayers

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## Reflection

Today, on this 43rd anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, we consider the past four decades in which our society has legally permitted abortion. Since that tragic decision, many children's lives have been lost, and many suffer that loss—often in silence. Yet God's greatest desire is to forgive. No matter how far we have each strayed from his side, he says to us, "Don't be afraid. Draw close to my heart."

*"In the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, also called confession, we meet the Lord, who wants to grant forgiveness and the grace to live a renewed life in him. ... We bishops and priests are eager to help you if you experience difficulty, hesitation, or uncertainty about approaching the Lord in this sacrament. If you have not received this healing sacrament in a long time, we are ready to welcome you"* ("God's Gift of Forgiveness": [www.goo.gl/oXNDBj](http://www.goo.gl/oXNDBj)).\* Let us run into the arms of Jesus, who is love and mercy.

\*Full URL: <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/penance/upload/Penance-Statement-ENG.pdf>

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## Acts of Reparation (choose one)

- Today, go visit an adoration chapel and spend some time with Jesus.
- Go to confession—today, if possible—or during this week. Before you go, look up St. Faustina and learn a little about the message of Divine Mercy she shared during her life.
- Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet ([www.goo.gl/hD0ijW](http://www.goo.gl/hD0ijW)) for those who are suffering the loss of a child through abortion, asking that they find healing and peace.

## One Step Further

- Hope After Abortion ([www.hopeafterabortion.com](http://www.hopeafterabortion.com))
- "How to Talk to a Friend Who's Had an Abortion" ([www.goo.gl/bz3pld](http://www.goo.gl/bz3pld))\*
- "Life Matters: Forgiveness and Healing after Abortion" ([www.goo.gl/J2WGnW](http://www.goo.gl/J2WGnW))\*



\*Full URL ("How to Talk to a Friend Who's Had an Abortion"): <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/2014/how-to-talk-to-a-friend-whos-had-an-abortion.cfm>

\*Full URL ("Life Matters: Forgiveness and Healing after Abortion"): <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/2013/life-matters-forgiveness-and-healing-after-abortion.cfm>



# DAY EIGHT

January 23, 2016

## Intercession

For an end to all domestic violence.

## Prayers

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## Reflection

“A correct reading of Scripture leads people to an understanding of the equal dignity of men and women and to relationships based on mutuality and love. Beginning with Genesis, Scripture teaches that women and men are created in God's image.” (“When I Call for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women,” USCCB 2002. See: [www.goo.gl/3n0373](http://www.goo.gl/3n0373)).

## Acts of Reparation (choose one)

- Do you love your cup of tea or coffee in the morning? Fast from caffeine today, or try your coffee black.
- Learn how to pray the Angelus prayer and consider saying it every day — on awakening, at noon or at 6 p.m. (or all three times).
- Give up your favorite form (or all forms) of social media for the day. Spend some of the extra time meditating upon a Scripture verse or passage.

## One Step Further

Three in four Americans are reported to know a victim of domestic violence. Learn to recognize some of the signs in “Life Matters: Domestic Violence,” which discusses the painful assault on human dignity that is domestic violence. Read the article at [www.goo.gl/gVJ9fd](http://www.goo.gl/gVJ9fd).

(Additional resources available at [www.goo.gl/CpKtLF](http://www.goo.gl/CpKtLF) and [www.goo.gl/ajGdPz](http://www.goo.gl/ajGdPz).)

*If you believe someone you know may be in a troubled situation, you should call a domestic violence hotline number for assistance, or encourage the person to call the hotline or emergency services themselves.*



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# DAY NINE

January 24, 2016

## Intercession

May we see and live the truth that every life is a good and perfect gift, and that our lives—all our lives—are worth living.

## Prayers

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## Reflection

Our culture is obsessed with perfection—a superficial perfection. Photos are airbrushed, and social media sites depict seemingly perfect lives. God calls us to seek perfection, too. He does not call us, however, to perfection of appearance or abilities, but to perfection in love.

In “A Perfect Gift,” one parent shares about the experience of raising a child with Down syndrome, contrasting it with what onlookers might perceive: “It’s like looking at a stained-glass window from the outside: The colors look dark, and you can’t quite make out the figures. From the inside, however, with the sun shining through it, the effect can be brilliant. From inside our family, love illuminates our life with Charlie.\* What may seem dreary to others, perhaps even unbearable, is actually filled with beauty and color.” May each of us experience the power of God’s transforming love, that our eyes may be opened to the incredible beauty of the people the Lord places in our lives.

## Acts of Reparation (choose one)

- Say a prayer for your parish priest ([www.goo.gl/jqOiNS](http://www.goo.gl/jqOiNS)). Without our priests, we could not have the Mass or the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Pray for your deceased relatives and those who have no one to pray for them.
- Spend quality time with a family member or friend; offer to help them with something with which they need assistance.

## One Step Further

Charlie’s mother shares in “A Perfect Gift” that when people say, “I could never handle a child with a disability,” she explains to them, “[Y]ou aren’t given *a* child with a disability. You are given *your* child with a disability. ...You are not called to ‘handle’ a disability. You are called to love a particular person, and caring for him or her grows out of that love. ...Our [family’s] hearts...have become larger [by caring for Charlie].”

She also talks about the “secret” that is the fundamental truth of our existence, which she and other parents of children with Down syndrome share. Find out what it is in “A Perfect Gift,” available at [www.goo.gl/QbXpcn](http://www.goo.gl/QbXpcn).\*\*

\*Name changed for privacy.

\*\*Full URL: <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/2015/a-perfect-gift.cfm>

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