

Toronto Catholic District School Board

Prayers

Respect for Life Week

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Prayers for Respect for Life Week

Prayer for life by Saint John Paul II

O Mary, bright dawn of the new world,
Mother of the living,
to you do we entrust the cause of life:
Look down, O Mother, upon the vast numbers
of babies to be born,
of the poor whose lives are made difficult,
of men and women who are victims of brutal violence,
of the elderly and the sick killed
by indifference or out of misguided mercy.
Grant that all who believe in your Son
may proclaim the Gospel of life
with honesty and love to the people of our time.
Obtain for them the grace
to accept that Gospel as a gift ever new,
the joy of celebrating it with gratitude
throughout their lives
and the courage to bear witness to it resolutely,
in order to build,
together with all people of good will,
the civilization of truth and love,
to the praise and glory of God,
the Creator and lover of life.

*~~ Saint John Paul II
Encyclical Letter "The Gospel of Life"
Given in Rome, on March 25,
the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord,
in the year 1995.*

Prayer for the Dignity of Human Life

Lord and giver of all life, help us to value each person, created in love by You. In Your mercy, guide and assist our efforts to promote dignity and value of all human life, born and unborn. We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

Respect for Life Prayers from Fully Alive

Life is a Gift

God you have given me my life and
made me
in your image.
I thank you
Help me to remember always that
life is a gift to enjoy
to respect, to celebrate,
to protect and to love.

Grade 4, Fully Alive, pg. 7

The Gift of Life

We give thanks O Lord
for the gift of our lives and for the
love of our parents.
You were with us from the moment
of conception. Send us your Spirit,
Lord, to help us live as your
children.

Grade 3 Fully Alive, pg. 65

I call heaven and earth to witness
against you today that I have set
before you life and death, blessings
and curses. Choose life so that you
and your descendants may live.

Deuteronomy 30:19

Loving God, everything you created is
good.

we have received life
from your hands
We have been created male and
female with the power to love and
care for each other and to share in
your creation.
We thank you for this gift.
We ask your help to cherish and
respect what you have created. We
ask your help to use the gift of
sexuality in the way you have
intended.

Grade 6, Fully Alive, pg. 56

Prayer for Parents

Loving Creator, author of life, we thank you for our special role in family life and for the gift we share with you in creating others in your own image and likeness. Life is so precious and so beautiful, mingling souls in so mysterious and satisfying ways.

May our human love and friendship reflect your own divine love. May we and our children be committed to being fully alive to your call and challenge, ever growing in discipleship and friendship with Jesus who alone is the way, the truth and the life.

May we praise you always. May we, without seeming to preach, teach you to our children and to others, not so much by our words as by our example.

from the Fully Alive Family Book

Respect for Life Resources

SCRIPTURE

Scripture

The work of Catholic Charity and respect for the human person is rooted in the Bible and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. The following Scripture references are foundational to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Some of the core areas include: a) the dignity of the Human Person; b.) the community and the common good; c) rights and Responsibilities; d) the option for the Poor ; and, e) Solidarity

Dignity of the Human Person

The Lord defends the poor

Injure not the poor because they are poor, nor crush the needy at the gate; For the LORD will defend their cause, and will plunder the lives of those who plunder them.

—Proverbs 22:22-23

A world of justice

He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart. He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty.

—Luke 1:51-55

Justice for the oppressed

The LORD does righteous deeds, brings justice to all the oppressed. His ways were revealed to Moses, mighty deeds to the people of Israel. Merciful and gracious is the LORD, slow to anger, abounding in kindness. God does not always rebuke, nurses no lasting anger, Has not dealt with us as our sins merit, nor requited us as our deeds deserve. As the heavens tower over the earth, so God's love towers over the faithful. As far as the east is from the west, so far have our sins been removed from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on the faithful. For he knows how we are formed, remembers that we are dust. Our days are like the grass; like flowers of the field we blossom. The wind sweeps over us and we are gone; our place knows us no more. But the LORD'S kindness is forever, toward the faithful from age to age. He favors the children's children of those who keep his covenant, who take care to fulfill its precepts.

—Psalm 103:6-18

The signs of the Messiah and his followers

When John heard in prison of the works of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to him with this question, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me."

—Matthew 11:2-6

Community and the Common Good - Seek good and not evil

Seek good and not evil, that you may live; then truly will the LORD, the God of hosts, be with you as you claim! Hate evil and love good, and let justice prevail at the gate; then it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts,

will have pity on the remnant of Joseph.
—Amos 5:14-15

Act justly and walk humbly with God

You have been told, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you:
Only to do the right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your
God.
—Micah 6:8

All things were held in common

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the
communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came
upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the
apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common;
they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all
according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to
meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes.
They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God
and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to
their number those who were being saved.
—Acts 2:43-47

Things were distributed to each according to need

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one
claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything
in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the
resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all.
There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or
houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the
feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.
—Acts 4:32-35

Put your gifts at the service of others

Be serious and sober for prayers. Above all, let your love for one another
be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one
another without complaining. As each one has received a gift, use it to
serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever
preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the
strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified
through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and dominion forever and
ever. Amen.
—1 Peter 4:7-11

Rights and Responsibilities

Justice is more pleasing than sacrifice

To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

—Proverbs 21:3

Justice for the oppressed

Praise the Lord, my soul; I shall praise the Lord all my life, sing praise to my God while I live. I put no trust in princes, in mere mortals powerless to save. When they breathe their last, they return to the earth; that day all their planning comes to nothing. Happy those whose help is Jacob's God, whose hope is in the Lord, their God, The maker of heaven and earth, the seas and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever, secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free; the Lord gives sight to the blind. The Lord rises up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord protects the stranger, sustains the orphan and the widow, but thwarts the way of the wicked. The Lord shall reign forever, your God, Zion, through all generations! Hallelujah!

—Psalm 146:2-10

Be doers of God's word

Do not be deceived, my beloved: all good giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no alteration or shadow caused by change. He willed to give us birth by the word of truth that we may be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. Know this, my dear friends: everyone should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of a man does not accomplish the righteousness of God. Therefore, put away all filth and evil excess and humbly welcome the word that has been planted in you and is able to save your souls. Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like. But the one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does. If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, his religion is vain. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

—James 1:17-27

Jesus shows compassion and responsibility Jesus summoned his disciples and said, "My heart is moved with pity for the crowd, for they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, for fear they may collapse on the way."

—Matthew 15:32

The Call to Servanthood

But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

—Matthew 20:26-28

Option for the Poor

Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me. ||

—Matthew 25:35-40

Show justice to the widow and orphan

You shall not wrong any widow or orphan. If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry. My wrath will flare up, and I will kill you with the sword; then your own wives will be widows, and your children orphans. If you lend money to one of your poor neighbors among my people, you shall not act like an extortioner toward him by demanding interest from him.

—Exodus 22:20-24

Happy are those who take refuge in the Lord

Look to God that you may be radiant with joy and your faces may not blush for shame. In my misfortune I called, the LORD heard and saved me from all distress. The angel of the LORD, who encamps with them, delivers all who fear God. Learn to savor how good the LORD is; happy are those who take refuge in him. Fear the LORD, you holy ones; nothing is lacking to those who fear him. The powerful grow poor and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing. Come, children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Who among you loves life, takes delight in prosperous days? Keep your tongue from evil, your lips from speaking lies. Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The LORD has eyes for the just and ears for their cry. The LORD'S face is against evildoers to wipe out their memory from the earth. When the just cry out, the LORD hears and rescues them from all distress.

—Psalm 34:6-18

Happy are they who are concerned with the lowly and poor

Happy those concerned for the lowly and poor; when misfortune strikes, the LORD delivers them. The LORD keeps and preserves them, makes them happy in the land, and does not betray them to their enemies.

—Psalm 41:1-3

He shows pity to the needy and the poor

O God, give your judgment to the king; your justice to the son of kings; that he may govern your people with justice, your oppressed with right judgment,

That the mountains may yield their bounty for the people, and the hills great abundance, That he may defend the oppressed among the people, save the poor and crush the oppressor. May he live as long as the sun endures, like the moon, through all generations. May he be like rain coming down upon the fields, like showers watering the earth, That abundance may flourish in his days, great bounty, till the moon be no more. May he rule from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth. May his foes kneel before him, his enemies lick the dust. May the kings of Tarshish and the islands bring tribute, the kings of Arabia and Seba offer gifts. May all kings bow before him, all nations serve him.

For he rescues the poor when they cry out, the oppressed who have no one to help.

He shows pity to the needy and the poor and saves the lives of the poor. From extortion and violence he frees them, for precious is their blood in his sight.

Long may he live, receiving gold from Arabia, prayed for without cease, blessed day by day.

May wheat abound in the land, flourish even on the mountain heights. May his fruit increase like Lebanon's, his wheat like the grasses of the land.

May his name be blessed forever; as long as the sun, may his name endure. May the tribes of the earth give blessings with his name; may all the nations regard him as favoured.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wonderful deeds. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may all the earth be filled with the LORD'S glory.

—Psalm 72:1-19

The Lord calls me to bring glad tidings to the lowly

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the broken-hearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, To announce a year of favour from the Lord and a day of vindication by

our God, to comfort all who mourn;
—Isaiah 61:1-2

Show kindness and compassion toward each other

Thus says the Lord of hosts: Render true judgment, and show kindness and compassion toward each other. Do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the alien or the poor; do not plot evil against one another in your hearts.

—Zechariah 7:9-10

Be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord

Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honour.

Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.

Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer.

Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality.

Bless those who persecute (you), bless and do not curse them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all.

If possible, on your part, live at peace with all.

—Romans 12:9-18

Blessed are you who are poor

And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said:

Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours.

Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh.

Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man.

Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.

But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

But woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep.

Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.

—Luke 6:20-26

Do not rob the poor man of his livelihood

My son, rob not the poor man of his livelihood; force not the eyes of the needy to turn away. A hungry man grieve not, a needy man anger not; Do

not exasperate the downtrodden; delay not to give to the needy. A beggar in distress does not reject; avert not your face from the poor. From the needy turn not your eyes, give no man reason to curse you; For if in the bitterness of his soul he curse you, his Creator will hear his prayer. Endear yourself to the assembly; before a ruler bow your head. Give a hearing to the poor man, and return his greeting with courtesy; Deliver the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor; let not justice be repugnant to you. To the fatherless be as a father, and help their mother as a husband would; Thus will you be like a son to the Most High, and he will be more tender to you than a mother.

—Sirach 4:1-10

Respect those who are labouring among you

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who are labouring among you and who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you, and to show esteem for them with special love on account of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all. See that no one returns evil for evil; rather, always seek what is good (both) for each other and for all. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

—1 Thessalonians 5:12-18

Be rich in good works

Tell the rich in the present age not to be proud and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth but rather on God, who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment. Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share, thus accumulating as treasure a good foundation for the future, so as to win the life that is true life

—1 Timothy 6:17-19

Riches obtained unjustly bring misery

Come now, you rich, weep and wail over your impending miseries. Your wealth has rotted away, your clothes have become moth-eaten, your gold and silver have corroded, and that corrosion will be a testimony against you; it will devour your flesh like a fire. You have stored up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on earth in luxury and pleasure; you have fattened your hearts for the day of slaughter. You have condemned; you have murdered the righteous one; he offers you no resistance. Be patient, therefore, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand.

—James 5:1-8

Solidarity

The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed

It is God who governs the world with justice, who judges the peoples with fairness. The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, stronghold in times of trouble. Those who honour your name trust in you; you never forsake those who seek you, Lord. Sing hymns to the Lord enthroned on Zion; proclaim God's deeds among the nations! Have mercy on me, LORD; see how my foes afflict me! You alone can raise me from the gates of death. Then I will declare all your praises, sing joyously of your salvation in the gates of daughter Zion.

—Psalm 9:9-15

He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will himself also call and not be heard.

—Proverbs 21:13

They shall beat their swords into plowshares

This is what Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In days to come, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills. All nations shall stream toward it; many peoples shall come and say: "Come, let us climb the Lord's mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob That he may instruct us in his ways, and we may walk in his paths." For from Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and impose terms on many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

—Isaiah 2:1-5

Be of one mind in Christ

If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but (also) everyone for those of others. Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name

that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
—Philippians 2:1-1

Justice will bring about peace

Until the spirit from on high is poured out on us. Then will the desert become an orchard and the orchard be regarded as a forest. Right will dwell in the desert and justices abide in the orchard. Justice will bring about peace; right will produce calm and security. My people will live in peaceful country, in secure dwellings and quiet resting places. Happy are you who sow beside every stream, and let the ox and the ass go freely!
—Isaiah 32:16-17

Solidarity with the outcasts of society

The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to him, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."
—Luke 15:1-2