

*Ordinary 27B / Mark 10:2-16*  
*October 4, 2009*  
**RESPECT LIFE SUNDAY**

The theme of our readings today seems to be about the Sacrament of Marriage and then the gospel ends with the story of the Apostles keeping the children from Jesus.

Well, to add to this sort of disconnect, the Church has designated this as Respect Life Sunday. We set the month of October to concentrate on respecting the life that God has given us, and all peoples.

Using the naïve attitude of a child, we lack the desire or ability to see anything but good in everyone and everything. Of course the down side of this is that there is sin in the world thus there is always the need to be proactive in the preservation of the sanctity of life from its very conception to a natural death.

When October comes around, most people, Catholics included, immediately think that the emphasis is always on the abortion issue. The purpose of this message is to clarify the true purpose of Respect Life; Sunday, Week, Month.

I have been reviewing some Papal Encyclicals lately due to my condition of insomnia. These letters can really put you right out for the night.

Actually, it's a personal incentive to educate myself on the Church's teachings related to the respect that is expected and is given to God's creation all over the world.

For example, Pope John Paul II issued an encyclical titled, "The Gospel of Life." It begins stating that the primary intention is to proclaim the good news of the value and dignity of each human life, of its grandeur and worth, also in its temporal phase. The latest phrase I've heard or read is, "From womb to tomb".

My analysis of the above is that while abortion is a most horrendous act of disrespect, just as much attention is required for respecting the common good of all we have been given in life. The common good includes in part, the economy, the environment, the rights of workers, and the right to freely practice your religion.

Hopefully by this point, I have sufficiently explained, in at least a general way, the many tentacles of social justice issues that are deteriorating all respect for life.

Now comes the call to action. Many St. Paul parishioners are participating in The 40 Days for Life campaign that will conclude on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Along with this movement, I recently attended a rural life conference regarding the plight of Ohio farmers. There were a lot of "a-ha" moments for this city boy.

We have all been given the means to Salvation through the Son of God. Along with this gift comes a great responsibility to take action, to be a witness to the love of God.

Through our Baptism into the Catholic Church, we are given the grace needed to be a witness of God's love for all mankind. We have been given much, so as Jesus tells us much will be expected. It is not enough to do just enough! God wants us to return the love he has bestowed on us in like manner. Of course there is no way we can love God as much as He deserves, but think of how the world would be if most of us at least tried. What would happen if every Catholic, every Christian, in this world would stand up for justice for all God's children as we pray today for Respect Life Sunday. I believe that God, our Father, is expecting that of us, and that we will soon come to the realization that it is possible because He has given us the means through his Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

We have all seen the moral decay that affects our family: the sit-coms on TV are getting more raunchy every season; there are more and more of these male clubs opening up in our neighborhoods; the courts and legislators are being pressed to allow same sex marriages; and we are still enforcing the death penalty for no better reason than "we can".

As a family member, let's start making an effort to turn the tide of this deterioration of human justice.

Let's be that little child that would make any father proud, let alone the Father of all Creation.

I will close with a poem that gives me introspection as well as incentive to do what Jesus did:

You are writing a Gospel,  
A chapter each day,  
By the deeds that you do,  
And the words that you say.

Men read what you write,  
If it's false or it's true.  
Now what is the Gospel  
According to you?