

## **READINGS AND PRAYERS FOR THE HOLY HOUR FOR LIFE**

*(From one man in regard to his fellow man I will demand an accounting of human life.)*

A reading from the Book of Genesis (9:1-7, Lectionary for Mass 338)

God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them:

"Be fertile and multiply to fill the earth.

Dread fear of you shall come upon all the animals of the earth

and all the birds of the air,

upon all the creatures that move about on the ground

and all the fishes of the sea;

into your power they are delivered.

Every creature that is alive shall be yours to eat;

I give them all to you as I did the green plants.

Only flesh with its lifeblood still in it you shall not eat.

For your own lifeblood, too, I will demand an accounting:

from every animal I will demand it,

and from one man in regard to his fellow man

I will demand an accounting for his human life.

If anyone sheds the blood of man,

by man shall his blood be shed;

For in the image of God

has man been made.

Be fertile, then, and multiply;

abound on earth and subdue it."

The word of the Lord.

Psalm 139: 1b-3, 13-14b, 23-24

R. Guide me Lord, along the everlasting way.

O Lord, you have probed me and you know me;

you know when I sit and when I stand;

you understand my thoughts from afar.

My journeys and my rest you scrutinize,

with all my way you are familiar.

R. Guide me Lord, along the everlasting way.

Truly you have formed my inmost being;  
you knit me in my mother's womb.  
I give you thanks that I am fearfully,  
wonderfully made;  
wonderful are your works.

R. Guide me Lord, along the everlasting way.

Probe me, O God, and know my heart;  
try me, and know my thoughts;  
See if my way is crooked,  
and lead me in the way of old.

R. Guide me Lord, along the everlasting way.

After a period of silent prayer:

## Gospel Acclamation

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R. Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord; whoever eats this bread will live forever. *John 6:51*

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

## Gospel

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*My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.*

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John (6:51-58, Lectionary for Mass 167)

Jesus said to the Jewish Crowds:

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven;  
whoever eats this bread will live forever;  
and the bread that I will give  
is my flesh for the life of the world."

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying,  
"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"  
Jesus said to them:

"Amen, amen, I say to you,  
unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,  
you do not have life within you.  
Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood  
has eternal life,  
and I will raise him on the last day.  
For my flesh is true food,  
and my blood is true drink.  
Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood  
remains in me and I in him.  
Just as the living Father sent me  
and I have life because of the Father,  
so also the one who feeds on me  
will have life because of me.  
This is the bread that came down from heaven.  
Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died,  
whoever eats this bread will live forever."

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God

## Intercessions

That justice, truth, and a love for the gift of life might inspire all legislators, governors, and our President, we pray to the Lord:  
: Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who do not embrace the rights of the unborn that, in love, they may come to know the dignity of every person in the eyes of God, we pray to the Lord:  
: Lord, hear our prayer.

For those preparing to receive the Sacrament of Marriage: that they might embrace their role as sharers in God's creative love, we pray to the Lord:  
: Lord, hear our prayer.

: For all who touch the lives of the condemned, the old, and the forgotten, that they might have compassion, respect, and appreciation for the dignity of all human life, we pray to the Lord:

: Lord, hear our prayer.

For the dying that through the love, care, and devotion of others they may know the beauty of life in their dying moments, we pray to the Lord:

Lord, hear our prayer.

: For the all the victims of the culture of death that like Lazarus, forgotten and poor, they may be welcomed into God's eternal peace, we pray to the Lord:

Lord, hear our prayer.

After a period of silent prayer:

## Reading

Pope John Paul II, Encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 25.

The blood of Christ, while it reveals the grandeur of the Father's love, shows how precious man is in God's eyes and how priceless the value of his life. The Apostle Peter reminds us of this: "You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Pt 1:18-19). Precisely by contemplating the precious blood of Christ, the sign of his self-giving love (cf. Jn 13:1), the believer learns to recognize and appreciate the almost divine dignity of every human being and can exclaim with ever renewed and grateful wonder: "How precious must man be in the eyes of the Creator, if he 'gained so great a Redeemer' (Exsultet of the Easter Vigil), and if God 'gave his only Son' in order that man 'should not perish but have eternal life' (cf. Jn 3:16)!"

Furthermore, Christ's blood reveals to man that his greatness, and therefore his vocation, consists in the sincere gift of self. Precisely because it is poured out as the gift of life, the blood of Christ is no longer a sign of death, of definitive separation from the brethren, but the instrument of a communion which is richness of life for all. Whoever in the Sacrament of the Eucharist drinks this blood and abides in Jesus (cf. Jn 6:56) is drawn into the dynamism of his love and gift of life, in order to bring to its fullness the original vocation to love which belongs to everyone (cf. Gen 1:27; 2:18-24).

It is from the blood of Christ that all draw the strength to commit themselves to promoting life. It is precisely this blood that is the most powerful source of hope, indeed it is the foundation of the absolute certitude that in God's plan life will be victorious. "And death shall be no more", exclaims the powerful voice which comes from the throne of God in the Heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 21:4). And Saint Paul assures us that the present victory over sin is a sign and

anticipation of the definitive victory over death, when there "shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory', 'O death, where is your victory' 'O death, where is your sting?' " (1 Cor 15:54-55).

After a period of silent prayer:

Litany for Life

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

R. Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

You breathed life into Adam

R. Lord, you give us life!

You formed Eve from flesh *Gn 2:7*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You heard the cry of innocent blood *Gn 9:5-6*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You spared the life of Cain *Gn 4:16*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You saved Noah from the flood *Gn 8:16*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You filled Sarah's barren womb *Gn 21:2*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You gave Abraham a son *Gn 21:3*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You preserved the life of Jacob *Gn 32:31*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You punished those who took life *Nm 35:31*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You place before us life and death *Dt 30:19*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You restore lost life *Rt 4:14*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You nourish the aged and weak *Rt 4:14*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You delivered Saul from David *1 Sm 26:22-24*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You redeemed the life of David *2 Sm 4:9*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You gave Solomon length of days *1 Kg 3:14*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You raised the child by Elijah's cry *1 Kg 17:21:22*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You are the Life that is the light of men *Jn 1:14*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You are the bread of Life *Jn 6:35*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You have the words of eternal life *Jn 6:68*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You are the resurrection and the life *Jn 11:25*

R. Lord, you give us life!

You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life *Jn 14:6*

R. Lord, you give us life!