

PRAYER GUIDE



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SIOUX FALLS

FOR THE CAMPAIGN TO AFFIRM
THE WOMEN'S HEALTH AND
HUMAN LIFE PROTECTION ACT
(HB 1215 – REFERRED LAW 6)



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and Human Life Protection Act
(HB 1215 – Referred Law 6)



INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls is offering this prayer guide as a way for Catholics in South Dakota and elsewhere to unite in prayer for human life and its protection from all attacks, and to specifically pray for the campaign to affirm the Women’s Health and Human Life Protection Act (HB 1215 – Referred Law 6) by a “yes” vote on the ballot on November 7, 2006.

We cannot neglect the reality of spiritual warfare in our daily lives, or its impact upon the efforts to build a culture of life. Prayer and the Sacraments are our most powerful weapons in this battle for life. Therefore, we highly encourage the faithful of our Diocese to use this Prayer Guide and the prayers included in it, to attend Mass, and to go to Confession, in order to help gain the graces needed to combat the culture of death.

Please pray and distribute this guide widely. A full text is available for printing and distribution at www.sfcatholic.org/can.

HOW TO USE THIS PRAYER GUIDE

You can use this prayer guide to pray individually or in groups, out loud (such as in an organized prayer service), or silently (such as during a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament). The hope is that hundreds, even thousands, of people will be joined in prayer throughout the coming months, “for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20)

The Participants:

If a group is using this guide, one person should be designated as the leader. If a priest or deacon is present, he will lead the prayer. The sections of the service marked “L” (for leader) are to be prayed aloud by the leader, and the sections marked “All” are to be prayed aloud by all the people (including the leader).



Location:

Because God is everywhere, we are always free to pray anywhere. Therefore, consider using this prayer guide in your home or at work, perhaps during your lunch break. However, if possible, pray at a church. Prayer in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, particularly during Eucharistic adoration, provides an ideal location for seeking the conversion of hearts necessary for a true respect for human life.

Schedule:

It is our hope that people will pray this often individually, but also that parishioners will meet weekly, or even more frequently, to pray together. If this is possible, try to choose at least one hour each week for this purpose, and try to involve as many people in the parish as possible, especially our youth.

Priests are asked to use the pulpit and parish bulletin to encourage attendance at this prayer service. Laity are encouraged, after meeting with their pastors, to make posters with the day, time, and location of the prayer service and put them up on the parish bulletin board.



PRAYER SERVICE

(All Rise.)

L: In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

L: As we begin this time of prayer for the defense of human life and specifically for the affirmation of the Women's Health and Human Life Protection Act (House Bill 1215 – Referred Law 6) in this November's election, we begin by acknowledging our own sinfulness by asking for the Lord's forgiveness:

(Pause for silent reflection to allow persons to call to mind their sins.)

All: I confess, to Almighty God, and to you my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do; and I ask the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, all the angels and saints, and you my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

L: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

L: Let us pray.

Loving and merciful God, hear the prayers of those who call upon You. We beg You to forgive our sins and to convert our hearts that we may embrace the gift of abundant life You offer to us. Grant to us a deeper respect and reverence for human life from the moment of conception through natural death. Help us to more fully see the dignity of human life through Your eyes that we may love each person with Your heart. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

(All sit for the proclamation of the Word of God.)

(Note: if a group is praying this, someone should come forward to proclaim the first reading, responsorial psalm and Gospel. If a priest or deacon is present, he should proclaim the Gospel reading.)



FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of Genesis 1:26-31

Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground." God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth." God also said: "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground, I give all the green plants for food." And so it happened. God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed--the sixth day.

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

OR

A reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 6:10-18

Finally, draw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens.

Therefore, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground. So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace. In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all (the) flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the



Spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones.

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

OR

A reading from St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 4:1-4

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths.

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

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

Response: "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.**

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.**

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.**



GOSPEL READING

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 6:51-58

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.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

OR

A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to John 3:16-18

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

OR

A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to John 14:23-29

Jesus answered and said to him, “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me.

“I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the holy Spirit that



the Father will send in my name--he will teach you everything and remind you of all that (I) told you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard me tell you, 'I am going away and I will come back to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

(In a group setting, someone should now read aloud one of the following reflections.)

Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life)*, 25:

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).

————— OR —————

**Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est (God is Love)*, 29:**

We have seen that the formation of just structures is not directly the duty of the Church, but belongs to the world of politics, the sphere of the autonomous use of reason. The Church has an indirect duty here, in that she is called to contribute to the purification of reason and to the reawakening of those moral forces without which just structures are neither established nor prove effective in the long run.

The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society, on the other hand, is proper to the lay faithful. As citizens of the State, they are called to take part in public life in a personal capacity. So they cannot relinquish their participation “in the many different economic, social, legislative, administrative and cultural areas, which are intended to promote organically and institutionally the *common good*.” The mission of the lay faithful is therefore to configure social life correctly, respecting its legitimate autonomy and cooperating with other citizens according to their respective competences and fulfilling their own responsibility. Even if the specific expressions of ecclesial charity can never be confused with the activity of the State, it still remains true that charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as “social charity”.

OR

Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est (God is Love)*, 38:

Certainly Job could complain before God about the presence of incomprehensible and apparently unjustified suffering in the world. In his pain he cried out: “Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat! ... I would learn what he would answer me, and understand what he would say to me. Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power? ... Therefore I am terrified at his presence; when I consider, I am in dread of him. God has made my heart faint; the Almighty has terrified me” (23:3, 5-6, 15-16). Often we cannot understand why God refrains from intervening. Yet he does not prevent us from crying out, like Jesus on the Cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mt 27:46). We should continue asking this question in prayerful dialogue before his face: “Lord, holy and true, how long will it be?” (Rev 6:10). It is Saint Augustine who gives us faith’s answer to our sufferings: “*Si comprehendis, non est Deus*”—“if you understand him, he is not God.” Our



protest is not meant to challenge God, or to suggest that error, weakness or indifference can be found in him. For the believer, it is impossible to imagine that God is powerless or that “perhaps he is asleep” (cf. *1 Kg* 18: 27). Instead, our crying out is, as it was for Jesus on the Cross, the deepest and most radical way of affirming our faith in his sovereign power. Even in their bewilderment and failure to understand the world around them, Christians continue to believe in the “goodness and loving kindness of God” (*Tit* 3:4). Immersed like everyone else in the dramatic complexity of historical events, they remain unshakably certain that God is our Father and loves us, even when his silence remains incomprehensible.

LITANY FOR LIFE

L: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

L: Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

L: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Response by All to the Litany: “Lord, You give us life!”

L: You breathed life into Adam...

L: You formed Eve from flesh...

L: You heard the cry of innocent blood...

L: You spared the life of Cain...

L: You saved Noah from the flood...

L: You filled Sarah’s barren womb...

L: You gave Abraham a son...

L: You preserved the life of Jacob...

L: You place before us life and death...

L: You restore lost life...

L: You nourish the aged and weak...

L: You delivered Saul from David...

L: You redeemed the life of David...

L: You gave Solomon length of days...

L: You raised the child by Elijah’s cry...

L: You are the Life that is the light of men...



- L: You are the bread of Life...
- L: You have the words of eternal life...
- L: You forgave those who took your life...
- L: You are the resurrection and the life...
- L: You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life...

PETITIONS IN DEFENSE OF HUMAN LIFE

Response by All to the Petitions: “Lord, hear our prayer”

- L: God is the author of life. In him we place our trust and hope as we pray...
- L: That Your Gospel of Life might be understood and professed by all Your people, we pray to the Lord...
- L: For all who do not embrace the gift of life in the womb that, in love, they may come to know the dignity of every person at every stage of life, we pray to the Lord...
- L: That the Mercy of the Father will be received by all who have participated in an abortion, the mothers, fathers, families, physicians and others, so that complete healing, forgiveness, and restoration may be theirs, we pray to the Lord...
- L: That justice, truth, and a love for the gift of life might inspire all legislators, governors, justices, and our president to enact laws and policies that protect and respect the gift of life, we pray to the Lord...
- L: For the Women’s Health and Human Life Protection Act, that through the campaign to affirm this bill, Your truth will be revealed and understood, that the bill will be affirmed at the ballot, and that this may lead us closer to the end of abortion in our state, nation, and world, we pray to the Lord...
- L: For those who work to defend the culture of life, that Your holy angels may protect them in their battle to speak Your truth in love, we pray to the Lord...
- L: 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...
- L: 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...



L: 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...

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

DEVOTION

At this time, please pray the Rosary or the Divine Mercy Chaplet keeping in mind the intention of the defense of human life and specifically the affirmation of the Women's Health and Human Life Protection Act (House Bill 1215 – Referred Law 6) in this November's election.

CLOSING PRAYER

L: Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, look with love and mercy upon Your people. Grant us the grace to fully receive and respect the gift of every human life. Grant Your mercy and forgiveness for all of our offenses against life, particularly the offense of abortion. Grant that our laws and hearts conform with the dignity of Your gift of life. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

BLESSING WITH A PRIEST OR DEACON

P/D: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

P/D: May almighty God bless you...

All: Amen.

BLESSING WITHOUT A PRIEST OR DEACON

L: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

PRAYER TO AFFIRM HOUSE BILL 1215 - REFERRED LAW 6

God our Father, source of all life, you have given us, as men and women created in your image and likeness, the great gift of bringing human life into the world and caring for it through self-giving love. Sadly, many of us are influenced by the culture of death, which destroys life rather than cares for it. Hear our prayer: through the power of your Son's death and resurrection bring victory to those who seek to promote the culture of life through the Women's Health and Human Life Protection Act (House Bill 1215 - Referred Law 6).

Lord, You know the mothers, fathers, physicians and others who have been involved in the evil of abortion. Grant that they may come to know and receive Your mercy and forgiveness. Through the power of the Holy Spirit touch their hearts, heal their wounds, comfort their grief and open their eyes to the truth.

We pray also for those who work to defend the culture of life. Anoint them with Your power to speak the truth in love. Send Your holy angels to protect us in this battle, for it is a battle to protect the most innocent and pure of our world: children yet to be born.

We ask this through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas, and in the Name of Jesus who is Lord forever and ever.

Amen.



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