

PRO-CHOICE LITURGY FOR THE 2024 ELECTION

The following liturgical materials are designed for your personal or communal prayer in the coming days. Pro-choice Catholics, whether you attend your local parish or have chosen to stay home, know that you are not alone.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Sunday, November 3, 2024

We begin this prayer in the name of our God, who is ever living, ever loving, and ever unfolding.

Amen.

CALL TO MINDFULNESS

Spirit of love, unclench our fists.

Spirit of truth, relax our jaws.

Spirit of justice, guide our feet.

We pray that, in the name of what is good, we may reject the separation of the love of God from the love of our neighbor.

May we come to know ourselves, interconnected in the web of creation and cherished in the presence of our Creator.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Mark 12:28b-34 (*Translation from A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church by Wilda C. Gafney*)

Now, one of the biblical scholars came near and heard them [the other biblical scholars, the chief priest, and the elders] discussing with one another, and seeing that Jesus answered them well, the scholar asked Jesus, "Which commandment is the first of all?"



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SCRIPTURE CONTINUED

Sunday, November 3, 2024

Mark 12:28b-34 (*Translation from A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church by Wilda C. Gafney*)

Jesus answered, “The first one is: ‘Hear Oh Israel: The Holy One our God, the Holy is one, you shall love the Holy One your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and all your strength.’ The second one is ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no greater commandment than these.” Then the biblical scholar said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘God is one and besides God, there is no other’; and to love God with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself. This is much more important than all whole burnt of offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw the scholar answered wisely, he said, “You are not far from the reign of God.” After that, no one dared to ask Jesus any questions.

HOMILY

By Steph Hanson-Quintana, Organizing and Movement Building Director for Catholics for Choice

Today, November 3, three days before Election Day, Catholics and people of faith across the United States gather in their places of worship and read the story of Jesus, emphasizing the importance of loving our neighbors.

This Gospel reading, beloved to many justice-seeking, faithful Catholics, is formational to the ethics of our faith and finds its roots in Jewish law and tradition. The story of Jesus we find in the lectionary for this week is more contentious than we might think.

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HOMILY CONTINUED

Sunday, November 3, 2024

When taken out of its narrative context, it sounds like a passing conversation between two people who, in agreement, uplift a shared core belief. But this story is more than that! Before the interaction with the biblical scholar in the Gospel reading, we find Jesus at the temple in a heated discussion with the religious authorities of his time. Jesus' authority is actively being questioned, and many tricky questions are coming his way: What about paying taxes? What's up with resurrection? As questions and arguments fly in every direction, we can hear Jesus' tone when he says, "Are you not misled because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God?" There is a little bit of attitude there.

So, we arrive at the interaction between Jesus and the scribe in the context of disagreement, division, and conflict. And something surprising happens: The scholar asks him about the greatest commandment, and Jesus responds simply by citing two important professions of Judaism: the *Shema* and the *Ahavta*. And then, he finishes by quoting the famous passage from Leviticus: **Love your neighbor as yourself.**

Jesus' clarity of mind is heartening. There are no "buts" or small print letters. There are no long explanations or complicated concepts. **The instructions are clear: Love your neighbor as yourself.**

Today, we also come to this historical moment in the midst of disagreement, division, and conflict. A looming question waits to be answered: Who are these neighbors Jesus insists on us loving?

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HOMILY CONTINUED

Sunday, November 3, 2024

After the recent passing of liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez, many people reflected on his famous words: “Do you love the poor? Name them.” There is power in the act of knowing and naming, which moves this act of loving into the material realm. It gives people a name but also a face, an address, a routine, a favorite color, and a beloved pet. It makes them relatable — or not. But it sure makes them real.

I am not here to preach about unity or tell you to find common ground with the people around the corner. I don't want to rush us to prescribed and sanitized solutions. **But I am here to invite you to be grounded in principle and committed to your practice of the vocational commitment to loving your neighbor.**

Reflecting on Jesus' invitation, I thought about my neighbors in the rural community I call home. One of my neighbors wakes early in the morning to dry his pick-up truck so the morning dew does not chip away its bright red color; another of my neighbors often drops off cinnamon cupcakes for my toddler because she knows how much he loves them. There is a very passionate dog rescuer in my neighborhood and a kindergartener who recently brought home a little kitty. I have neighbor goats and a mango tree beloved by all.

Who are your neighbors? Who builds life in your vicinity? With whom do you share a wall, a street name, or a zip code? Are you being called to love them in the form of care and protection? Or are you being called to love them in the form of accountability and truth-telling?

PRO-CHOICE LITURGY FOR THE 2024 ELECTION

HOMILY CONTINUED

Sunday, November 3, 2024

Last month, Catholics for Choice published a resource to support voters grappling with the call to participation — and yes! That includes voting. Our call to love our neighbors this upcoming Tuesday will mean casting a ballot. But come Wednesday, when the sun rises and the democratic exercise is said and done, we will be back in our communities, faced with the reality of who our neighbors are.

At the end of this election season, we will be faced with the same straightforward task of loving our neighbors in ways that require that we turn with awe and curiosity about who they are. What we build after election day, what we organize for or against, should always tell the story of deep love in the form of commitment to those around us.

Unfortunately, despite the clear biblical mandate to love our neighbor, Catholic bishops and priests will weaponize the pulpit, spreading misinformation. They make the intentional decision to promote policies and candidates that, contrary to the good news of neighborly love, take rights **from** our neighbor. This politically motivated decision disregards the values of the Catholic majority who support reproductive freedom. It only aligns with a small minority of 8% of Catholics who share their belief that abortion should be illegal in all cases.

This Sunday, November 3, priests across the country have one job: to share about the love of God and the love of neighbor, and many will fail at it.

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HOMILY CONTINUED

Sunday, November 3, 2024

At Catholics for Choice, we invite you to be emboldened by Jesus' words and take heart in his principled commitment to what is right and just.

Some of us will organize to protect our most vulnerable neighbors.

Some of us will organize to speak the truth and witness the attacks our neighbors will inflict on others.

Some of us will care in the form of disruption and direct action.

Some of us will care through mutual aid and direct services.

However you decide to engage your neighbor, do it grounded in the good news of embodied love. Jesus has taught us well.

Amen.

PRO-CHOICE LITURGY FOR THE 2024 ELECTION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Sunday, November 3, 2024

We pray for all who will walk into the voting booth tomorrow to vote with their conscience. May all be met with a peaceful process as they exercise democracy.

We pray for poll workers. May they be safe and protected from violence.

We pray for organizers, advocates, and volunteers. May they find rest after a job well done.

We pray for everyone in states with reproductive rights on the ballot. We pray that your freedoms are enshrined and protected, leaving a legacy for generations to come.

We pray for peace as we wait for results. As we all experience stress, anxiety, and uncertainty, we pray for grounding, hope, and community to wade through this period.

Let us pray for the strength and courage to love our neighbors as Jesus did.

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CLOSING PRAYER

Sunday, November 3, 2024

Mary, Undoer of Knots, hear our prayer

By your guidance, our sadness and anger

does not turn to despair.

Through you, we find comfort and resolve.

Through you, we honor Catholic social justice.

Through you, we honor reproductive justice.

Mary, Undoer of Knots,

be with us in the voting booth.

Through you, we came together

Through you, we shared our truths.

When we have done all that we can,

we pray.

Mary, Undoer of Knots, hear our prayer.

REFLECTION SPACE



Who are your neighbors? Who builds life in your vicinity? With whom do you share a wall, a street name, or a zip code? Are you being called to love them in the form of care and protection? Or are you being called to love them in the form of accountability and truth-telling?

A series of horizontal dashed lines providing space for reflection.