

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
January 25, 2026
“Repent and believe in life!”

The first message of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and Saint Peter can be summed up in one word: “*Repent*” (Mt. 3:2; Mk. 1:15; Acts 2:38). To repent means to change one’s mind, to be enlightened, and to take a new course on the path of life. What we think leads to happiness and fulfillment is often wrong, and so grace is essential.

The command to repent comes because light has broken into darkness. Our Lord says in today’s Gospel that the reason, motive, and basis of repentance is the kingdom of heaven. A kingdom has broken into our world. When we see its light, as we did on Epiphany, and are attracted by it, we begin to move in its direction. This means breaking from sinful thoughts, words, and deeds.

The great darkness of our day is the myth that some lives, like those in the womb, don’t count. To many people, these hidden lives are not worthy of constitutional protection, not worthy of public witness, and not even worthy of discussion. Each day, more than 28-hundred babies are destroyed in abortion (Guttmacher Institute, 2024); a senseless war in Ukraine; a Canadian woman euthanized without her consent; a woman shot by ICE officers in Minneapolis. These are our brothers and sisters, made in the image and likeness of God, formed in their mothers’ wombs, destined for adoption in Christ Jesus (Gen. 1:27; Jer. 1:5; Eph. 1:5).

What happened in Saint Paul’s day, recounted in the second reading, is repeated in our day, when we say, “I belong to this political party.” “I belong to that organization.” “I follow this particular philosophy of life.” Because of these false

divisions, and excess loyalty to the things and philosophies of this world, millions of our fellow citizens adopt the “right to choose” abortion.

Jesus Christ breaks through these false divisions. If all of us are one in Christ Jesus, it is because He has united all human life to Himself and called each of us to life and fellowship with God. Raising human life to the heights of heaven, where the angels call “home,” He has raised up men and women, born and pre-born.

There is only one human nature, and by the Incarnation and Paschal Mystery of our Lord’s suffering, death, and resurrection, everyone who shares human nature shares in the very life of God. Because of this truth, we uphold the dignity of every human person. This is the light that breaks into our darkness, the truth that sets us free, and the kingdom of God that calls us to repent of sin and live.

The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. Like the lampstand elsewhere in the Gospel (Mt. 5:15), we hold the bright light of Christ up for the world to see, as a woman named Linda, who had an abortion, recounted:

“My breaking point with . . . [my] former church was when I was feeling truly guilty because of what I had done. I knew it was wrong, but people were trying to justify it to me. I didn’t need justification. I needed to know how to reconcile an already fragmented relationship with the Lord I desired, but I was too weighed down, and no one seemed to see the need for forgiveness and reconciliation . . . at least until I came into contact with the Catholic Church. The funny thing is, so many people see the Church as uncompassionate and uncaring, but it was [the place] where I found love, acceptance, and forgiveness.” (www.abortiontestimonials.com).

In this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, following the 53rd anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* abortion decision, may the Holy Spirit, the “Lord and Giver of life” lead us to atone for this sin and work together to build a Culture of Life and a Civilization of Love. God bless you.