

Day for Life Prayer Vigils

Notes

Silence

- Silence will be a key part of the vigil. Those planning and those leading will need consider where silence will occur and how long it might be.
- Some of the longer, more reflective silences might be accompanied by gentle singing or instrumental music.

Entrance & Final Procession

- An opening and closing procession will depend on the venue etc.
- A procession can offer a clear opening and ending to the liturgy
- The alternative is that the ministers make their way to the Sanctuary, discreetly, and join the assembly in silent prayer.
- In a similar way at the end there can either be a dismissal and procession or an invitation to stay and pray,
- Music suggestions are given in Appendix 1.

Scripture Readings

- 3 possible sets of readings have been given:
 - A. *Women preparing and giving birth in surprising or difficult circumstances.* The story of Elizabeth and Mary and the birth of John the Baptist has echoes in the Old Testament where pregnancy can be long awaited and/or a surprise.
 - B. *An extended reflection on Naomi and Ruth* — women supporting one another. This leads to a choice of Gospel: either the genealogy of Jesus where Ruth as the great-grandmother of David is one of the four women mentioned (a reminder that a birth can have untold later consequences); or the Canaanite women who seeking healing for her daughter recognises Jesus as Son of David.
 - C. *The Mercy of God.* Whatever the circumstances God's love and mercy is greater than whatever we have done.

Response

- A number of suggested responses are given. One or more of these might be used depending on the intended length and focus of the Vigil.
- Silence should also be incorporated between the different responses.
- It is expected that all Prayer Vigils will include the Intercessions and Concluding Prayer.

Structure

Introduction

- Opening Song
- Greeting
- Introduction
- Collect

Liturgy of the Word

- Set A *or*
- Set B *or*
- Set C

Reflection

- Silence & Homily
- Response – one or more of the following might be used.
 1. Stories – from Day for Life material
 2. Prayer to Mary, Mother of the Life within (see card)
 3. Action – e.g. invitation to light a candle in memory
 4. Litany of Sacred Heart
 5. Litany of Sorrow
 6. Music
- Intercessions
- Concluding Prayer
- Dismissal

Introduction

Opening Song

Greeting

- Sign of the Cross and Greeting from the *Roman Missal*

Introduction

The celebrant introduces the Vigil and invites those present into reflection in these or similar words.

In October it will be 50 years since the 1967 Abortion Act was passed in England, Scotland and Wales. This year's *Day for Life* provides us with an opportunity to pray for and remember all lives lost before birth and to offer practical and emotional support to women and men who are worried and concerned about an unexpected pregnancy. For those who have had an abortion, this anniversary year is a reminder that 50 years on: 'there is no sin that God's mercy cannot reach and wipe away when it finds a repentant heart seeking to be reconciled with the Father'.

In his Angelus address on the Italian *Day for Life* in February this year, Pope Francis said to thousands gathered in St Peter's Square, 'May no one be left alone and may love defend the sense of life'. Citing the words of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, he continued: 'Life is beauty, admire it. Life is life, fight for it... Each life is sacred. Let's pray together for those children who are in danger of interruption of pregnancy and for those who are nearing the end of life.' These words can help us rediscover a spirit of awe towards the gift of human life and stir our hearts to the wonder of this gift.

Pope Francis also points out that we have not done enough to support and accompany pregnant women in desperate circumstances. Within our parish communities, we are called to reach out and accompany all those who are alone, and to offer real practical support to those in need, which includes worried mums and dads and those struggling with the news of their pregnancy.

Let us keep these thoughts in mind as we keep our vigil of prayer together.

Collect

As well as there being a silence after 'Let us pray'. There might also be one after the Collect.

Let us pray.

Almighty and most gentle God,
who brought forth from the rock
a fountain of living water for your thirsty people,
bring forth, we pray,
from the hardness of hearts, tears of sorrow,
that we may lament our sins
and merit forgiveness from your mercy.
Though Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

Set A

First Reading

Genesis 21: 1–7
The birth of Isaac

The Lord dealt kindly with Sarah as he had said, and did what he had promised her. So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the time God had promised. Abraham named the son born to him Isaac, the son to whom Sarah had given birth. Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Then Sarah said, ‘God has given me cause to laugh; all those who hear of it will laugh with me.’ She added:

‘Who would have told Abraham
that Sarah would nurse children!
Yet I have borne him a child in his old age.’

The word of the Lord.

Or

1 Samuel 1:9–20
The Lord was mindful of Hannah and she gave birth to Samuel.

After they had eaten in the hall, Hannah rose and took her stand before the Lord, while Eli the priest was sitting on his seat by the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. In the bitterness of her soul she prayed to the Lord with many tears and made a vow, saying, ‘Lord of hosts! If you will take notice of the distress of your servant, and bear me in mind and not forget your servant and give her a man-child, I will give him to the Lord for the whole of his life and no razor shall ever touch his head.’

While she prayed before the Lord which she did for some time, Eli was watching her mouth, for she was speaking under her breath; her lips were moving but her voice could not be heard. He therefore supposed that she was drunk and said to her, ‘How long are you going to be in this drunken state? Rid yourself of your wine.’ ‘No, my lord,’ Hannah replied ‘I am a woman in great trouble; I have taken neither wine nor strong drink – I was pouring out my soul before the Lord. Do not take your maidservant for a worthless woman; all this time I have been speaking from the depth of my grief and my resentment.’ Then Eli answered her: ‘Go in peace,’ he said ‘and may the God of Israel grant what you have asked of him.’ And she said, ‘May your maidservant find favour in your sight’; and with that the woman went away; she returned to the hall and ate and was dejected no longer.

They rose early in the morning and worshipped before the Lord and then set out and returned to their home in Ramah. Elkanah had intercourse with Hannah his wife and the Lord was mindful of her. She conceived and gave birth to a son, and called him Samuel ‘since’ she said ‘I asked the Lord for him.’

The word of the Lord

Or

Judges 13: 2–7. 24–25

The birth of Samson was announced by an angel

There was a man of Zorah of the tribe of Dan, called Manoah. His wife was barren, she had borne no children. The angel of the Lord appeared to this woman and said to her, ‘You are barren and have had no child. But from now on take great care. Take no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean. For you will conceive and bear a son. No razor is to touch his head, for the boy shall be God’s nazirite from his mother’s womb. It is he who will begin to rescue Israel from the power of the Philistines.’ Then the woman went and told her husband, ‘A man of God has just come to me; his presence was like the presence of the angel of God, he was so majestic. I did not ask him where he came from, and he did not reveal his name to me. But he said to me, “You will conceive and bear a son. From now on, take no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean. For the boy shall be God’s nazirite from his mother’s womb to his dying day.”’

The woman gave birth to a son and called him Samson. The child grew, and the Lord blessed him; and the spirit of the Lord began to move him.

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 29: 2. 4–6. 11–13. r. 2

℟̥. I will praise you, Lord, you have rescued me.

I will praise you, Lord, you have rescued me
and have not let my enemies rejoice over me.

O Lord, you have raised my soul from the dead,
restored me to life from those who sink into the grave. ℟̥.

Sing psalms to the Lord, you who love him,
give thanks to his holy name.

His anger lasts a moment; his favour all through life.
At night there are tears, but joy comes with dawn. ℟̥.

The Lord listened and had pity.

The Lord came to my help.

For me you have changed my mourning into dancing,
O Lord my God, I will thank you for ever. ℟̥.

Or

Psalm 70 :1-6. 15. 17. v.6

℟️ From my mother's womb you have been my help.

In you, O Lord, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.

In your justice rescue me, free me:
pay heed to me and save me. ℟️

Be a rock where I can take refuge,
a mighty stronghold to save me;
for you are my rock, my stronghold.
Free me from the hand of the wicked. ℟️

It is you, O Lord, who are my hope,
my trust, O Lord, since my youth.
On you I have leaned from my birth,
from my mother's womb you have been my help. ℟️

My lips will tell of your justice
and day by day of your help.
O God, you have taught me from my youth
and I proclaim your wonders still. ℟️

Gospel Acclamation

Ps 144:13

The Lord is faithful in all his words
and loving in all his deeds.

Or

Cf. 2 Tim 1:10

Our Saviour Christ Jesus abolished death,
and he has proclaimed life through the Good News.

Gospel

Luke 1:5-25

The birth of John the Baptist foretold.

In the days of King Herod of Judaea there lived a priest called Zechariah who belonged to the Abijah section of the priesthood, and he had a wife, Elizabeth by name, who was a descendant of Aaron. Both were worthy in the sight of God, and scrupulously observed all the commandments and observances of the Lord. But they were childless: Elizabeth was barren and they were both getting on in years.

Now it was the turn of Zechariah's section to serve, and he was exercising his priestly office before God when it fell to him by lot, as the ritual custom was, to enter the Lord's sanctuary and burn incense there. And at the hour of incense the whole congregation was outside, praying.

Then there appeared to him the angel of the Lord, standing on the right of the altar of incense. The sight disturbed Zechariah and he was overcome with fear. But the angel said to him, 'Zechariah, do not be afraid, your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth

is to bear you a son and you must name him John. He will be your joy and delight and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord; he must drink no wine, no strong drink. Even from his mother's womb he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, and he will bring back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah, he will go before him to turn the hearts of fathers towards their children and the disobedient back to the wisdom that the virtuous have, preparing for the Lord a people fit for him.' Zechariah said to the angel, 'How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is getting on in years.' The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel who stand in God's presence, and I have been sent to speak to you and bring you this good news. Listen! Since you have not believed my words, which will come true at their appointed time, you will be silenced and have no power of speech until this has happened.' Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and were surprised that he stayed in the sanctuary so long. When he came out he could not speak to them, and they realised that he had received a vision in the sanctuary. But he could only make signs to them, and remained dumb.

When his time of service came to an end he returned home. Some time later his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept to herself. 'The Lord has done this for me' she said 'now that it has pleased him to take away the humiliation I suffered among men.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Or

Luke 1: 39–45 (56–58)

Mary visits Elizabeth and birth of John the Baptist.

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

The time came for Elizabeth to have her child, and she gave birth to a son; and when her neighbours and relations heard that the Lord had shown her so great a kindness, they shared her joy.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Liturgy of the Word

Set B

Reading 1

Ruth 1: 1. 3-6. 14-16. 22

Naomi came back with Ruth the Moabitess and came to Bethlehem.

In the days of the Judges famine came to the land and a certain man from Bethlehem of Judah went – he, his wife and his two sons – to live in the country of Moab. Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she and her two sons were left. These married Moabite women: one was named Orpah and the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years. Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died and the woman was bereft of her two sons and her husband. So she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard that the Lord had visited his people and given them food. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and went back to her people. But Ruth clung to her.

Naomi said to her, 'Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her god. You must return too; follow your sister-in-law.'

But Ruth said, 'Do not press me to leave you and to turn back from your company, for

'wherever you go, I will go,
wherever you live, I will live.
Your people shall be my people,
and your God, my God.'

This was how Naomi, she who returned from the country of Moab, came back with Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 138: 1-12

℟: I thank you for the wonder of my being.

O Lord, you search me and you know me,
you know my resting and my rising,
you discern my purpose from afar.
You mark when I walk or lie down,
all my ways lie open to you. ℟:

Before ever a word is on my tongue
you know it, O Lord, through and through.
Behind and before you besiege me,
your hand ever laid upon me.
Too wonderful for me, this knowledge,
too high, beyond my reach. ℟:

O where can I go from your spirit,
or where can I flee from your face?

If I climb the heavens, you are there.
If I lie in the grave, you are there. R̥

If I take the wings of the dawn
and dwell at the sea's furthest end,
even there your hand would lead me,
your right hand would hold me fast. R̥

If I say: "Let the darkness hide me
and the light around me be night,"
even darkness is not dark for you
and the night is as clear as the day. R̥

(cf. StJB 24/6)

Reading 2

Ruth 2: 1–3, 8–11; 4: 13–17

*The Lord has not left the dead man without next of kin to perpetuate his name.
This was the father of David's father, Jesse.*

Naomi had a kinsman on her husband's side, well-to-do and of Elimelech's clan. His name was Boaz.

Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'Let me go into the fields and glean among the ears of corn in the footsteps of some man who will look on me with favour.' And she said to her, 'Go, my daughter.' So she set out and went to glean in the fields after the reapers. And it chanced that she came to that part of the fields which belonged to Boaz of Elimelech's clan.

Boaz said to Ruth, 'Listen, my daughter, and understand this. You are not to glean in any other field, do not leave here but stay with my servants. Keep your eyes on whatever part of the field they are reaping and follow behind. I have ordered my servants not to molest you. And if you are thirsty, go to the pitchers and drink what the servants have drawn.' Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground. And she said to him, 'How have I so earned your favour that you take notice of me, even though I am a foreigner?' And Boaz answered her, 'I have been told all you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband's death, and how you left your own father and mother and the land where you were born to come among a people whom you knew nothing about before you came here.'

So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. And when they came together, the Lord made her conceive and she bore a son. And the woman said to Naomi, 'Blessed be the Lord who has not left the dead man without next of kin this day to perpetuate his name in Israel. The child will be a comfort to you and the prop of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you and is more to you than seven sons has given him birth.' And Naomi took the child to her own bosom and she became his nurse.

And the women of the neighbourhood gave him a name. 'A son has been born for Naomi' they said; and they named him Obed. This was the father of David's father, Jesse.

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 138: 13–24

℟. I thank you for the wonder of my being.

For it was you who created my being,
knit me together in my mother's womb.
I thank you for the wonder of my being,
for the wonders of all your creation. ℟.

Already you knew my soul,
my body held no secret from you
when I was being fashioned in secret
and moulded in the depths of the earth. ℟.

Your eyes saw all my actions,
they were all of them written in your book;
every one of my days was decreed
before one of them came into being. ℟.

To me, how mysterious your thoughts,
the sum of them not to be numbered!
If I count them, they are more than the sand;
to finish, I must be eternal, like you. ℟.

O God, that you would slay the wicked!
Men of blood, keep far away from me!
With deceit they rebel against you
and set your designs at naught. ℟.

Do I not hate those who hate you,
abhor those who rise against you?
I hate them with a perfect hate
and they are foes to me. ℟.

O search me, God, and know my heart.
O test me and know my thoughts.
See that I follow not the wrong path
and lead me in the path of life eternal. ℟.

Gospel Acclamation

cf. Ps 84:8

Let us see, O Lord, your mercy
and give us your saving help.

Gospel

Matthew 1:1–25

The ancestry of Jesus Christ, the son of David

A genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:

Abraham was the father of Isaac,
Isaac the father of Jacob,
Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers,
Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah, Tamar being their mother,
Perez was the father of Hezron,
Hezron the father of Ram,
Ram was the father of Amminadab,
Amminadab the father of Nahshon,
Nahshon the father of Salmon,
Salmon was the father of Boaz, Rahab being his mother,
Boaz was the father of Obed, Ruth being his mother,
Obed was the father of Jesse;
and Jesse was the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,
Solomon was the father of Rehoboam,
Rehoboam the father of Abijah,
Abijah the father of Asa,
Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat,
Jehoshaphat the father of Joram,
Joram the father of Azariah,
Azariah was the father of Jotham,
Jotham the father of Ahaz,
Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,
Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh,
Manasseh the father of Amon,
Amon the father of Josiah;
and Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers.
Then the deportation to Babylon took place.

After the deportation to Babylon:
Jechoniah was the father to Shealtiel,
Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,
Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud,
Abiud the father of Eliakim,
Eliakim the father of Azor,
Azor was the father of Zadok,
Zadok the father of Achim,
Achim the father of Eliud,
Eliud was the father of Eleazar,
Eleazar the father of Matthan,

Matthan the father of Jacob;
and Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary; of her was born Jesus who is called Christ.

The sum of generations is therefore: fourteen from Abraham to David; fourteen from David to the Babylonian deportation; and fourteen from the Babylonian deportation to Christ.

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The Virgin will conceive and give birth to a son
and they will call him Emmanuel,

a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home and, though he had not had intercourse with her, she gave birth to a son; and he named him Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord

Or

Matthew 15:21–28

Son of David, take pity on me. Woman, you have great faith.

Jesus left Gennesaret and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Then out came a Canaanite woman from that district and started shouting, 'Sir, Son of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil.' But he answered her not a word. And his disciples went and pleaded with him. 'Give her what she wants,' they said 'because she is shouting after us.' He said in reply, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.' But the woman had come up and was kneeling at his feet. 'Lord,' she said 'help me.' He replied, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs.' She retorted, 'Ah yes, sir; but even house-dogs can eat the scraps that fall from their master's table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted.' And from that moment her daughter was well again.

The Gospel of the Lord

Liturgy of the Word

Set C

First Reading

Jeremiah 31: 15 –17
A voice is heard from Ramah.

Thus speaks the Lord:

A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamenting and weeping bitterly:
it is Rachel weeping for her children,
refusing to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.

The Lord says this:

Stop your weeping, dry your eyes,
your hardships will be redressed:
they shall come back from the enemy country.
There is hope for your descendants:
your sons will come home to their own lands.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 102: 1–4, 9–12. r. 4

℟. The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord,
all my being, bless his holy name.
My soul, give thanks to the Lord
and never forget all his blessings. ℟.

It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals every one of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with love and compassion. ℟.

His wrath will come to an end;
he will not be angry for ever.
He does not treat us according to our sins
nor repay us according to our faults. ℟.

For as the heavens are high above the earth
so strong is his love for those who fear him.
As far as the east is from the west
so far does he remove our sins. ℟.

Second Reading

2 Cor:3-7

God comforts us, so that we can offer others consolation in their sorrows.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, a gentle Father and the God of all consolation, who comforts us in all our sorrows, so that we can offer others, in their sorrows, the consolation that we have received from God ourselves. Indeed, as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so, through Christ, does our consolation overflow. When we are made to suffer, it is for your consolation and salvation. When, instead, we are comforted, this should be a consolation to you, supporting you in patiently bearing the same sufferings as we bear. And our hope for you is confident, since we know that, sharing our sufferings, you will also share our consolations.

The word of the Lord

Gospel Acclamation

Psalm 144:13

The Lord is faithful in all his word
and loving in all his deeds.

Gospel

Luke 6: 36-38

Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned yourselves; grant pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back.’

The Gospel of the Lord

[7OTC]

Reflection

After the Gospel there is a period of Silence followed by

Homily/Reflection

if required.

Response

One or more of the following might then take place:

1. Stories – from Day for Life material
2. Prayer to Mary, Mother of the Life within (see card)
3. Action – e.g. invitation to light a candle in memory
4. Litany of Sacred Heart
5. Litany of Sorrow
6. Music

4 Litany of the Sacred Heart

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

God our Father in heaven
God the Son, Redeemer of the world
God the Holy Spirit
Holy Trinity, one God

Heart of Jesus, Son of the eternal Father
Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit
 in the womb of the Virgin Mother
Heart of Jesus, one with the eternal Word
Heart of Jesus, infinite in majesty
Heart of Jesus, holy temple of God
Heart of Jesus, tabernacle of the Most High
Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of heaven
Heart of Jesus, aflame with love for us.
Heart of Jesus, source of justice and love
Heart of Jesus, full of goodness and love
Heart of Jesus, well-spring of all virtue
Heart of Jesus, patient and full of mercy
Heart of Jesus, generous to all who turn to you
Heart of Jesus, fountain of life and holiness
Heart of Jesus, atonement for our sins
Heart of Jesus, overwhelmed with insults
Heart of Jesus, broken for our sins
Heart of Jesus, obedient even to death
Heart of Jesus, pierced by a lance

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

have mercy on us.
have mercy on us.
have mercy on us.
have mercy on us.

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have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation	have mercy on us.
Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection	have mercy on us.
Heart of Jesus, our peace and reconciliation	have mercy on us.
Heart of Jesus, victim for our sins	have mercy on us.
Heart of Jesus, salvation of all who trust in you	have mercy on us.
Heart of Jesus, hope of all who die in you	have mercy on us.
Heart of Jesus, delight of all the saints	have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world	have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world	have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world	have mercy on us.

℣. Jesus, gentle and humble of heart.

℟. Touch our hearts and make them like your own.

5 Litany of Sorrow

Each line might be responded to with a short sung Kyrie.

For times when we could have stretched out the hand of friendship and support.
Kyrie, eleison.

For our blindness to the needs of others.

For the ease with which we give up our hope for change.

For when we put human limits on God's mercy.

For when we forget to look with God's compassion.

For our desire for quick and easy responses and solutions.

For all who are harassed because their beliefs do not conform.

For all who counsel but do not offer choices.

For all who believe they have no choice to discover different pathways.

For all who are hurting and waiting for the gift of healing.

For all whom the mess of the past haunts them to this day.

For a world where each new life is cherished.

For a world where each new life can be nurtured.

For a world where each life has dignity from cradle to grave.

6 Music

During the period of Reflection there might be music either between the chosen items or accompanying the lighting of candles. This could include pieces sung by the whole congregation or the musicians alone.

Intercessions

For all who work to change the law,
may they never give up hope.

Lord, in your mercy.
Hear our prayer.

For all who are pregnant and face tough decisions;
may they be guided by God's love and find the support they need.

For friends and family who stand alongside each pregnant mother;
may they offer the support which is needed.

For those who have no one close to turn to;
may they find help and compassion.

For all who work to care for mothers and babies;
may they show love and empathy.

For a society in which each new life is treasured
and there are no barriers to the fruitful development.

Concluding Prayer

O God, our past and future hope,
to you a thousand years are like yesterday, come and gone.
Teach us to see the world through your eyes,
to recognise the faults of the past,
and, however dimly, to see the future with hope.

Let us seek out the places of hurt
where we can offer your love and compassion.
Find the places of darkness and despair
where your mercy can bring light and comfort.

May we be heralds of a new world
where every human life is treated with dignity,
where all can live and have abundant life.

We make our prayer.

The Vigil may either end with a dismissal (taken from the Roman Missal) or with an invitation for people to stay and continue praying.

Appendices

1. Music Suggestions

Opening Song

Hymn or song about God's mercy or trusting in God, such as:

- Be still, my soul
- There's a wideness in God's mercy
- Lead, kindly light
- Amazing grace

Psalms

Settings of the following should be found books of Sunday Responsorial Psalms or websites

Psalm 29	Easter Vigil, psalm after 4th Reading
Psalm 70	Nativity of St John the Baptist: Vigil
Psalm 138	Nativity of St John the Baptist: Day
Psalm 102	24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Response: Music

The readings will suggest a variety of pieces which might include:

- Settings of Psalm 138 (139)
- Settings of the 'Song of Ruth'
- A quiet setting of the Magnificat
- Texts about God's love and mercy
- Texts about trusting on God, hope and guidance

Litany of Sorrow

- A Taizé *Kyrie* would be suitable.

Final Procession

Where there is a final procession this may be better accompanied by organ or instrumental music.

2. Sources

Collect

- Roman Missal VNO 38b, page 1371

Readings

Genesis 21: 1–7

1 Samuel 1:9–20

Judges 13: 2–7. 24–25

Luke 1:5–25

Luke 1:39–45. 56–58

Ruth 1: 1. 3–6. 14–16. 22

Ruth 2: 1–3. 8–11; 4: 13–17

Matthew 1:1–25

Matthew 15:21–28

Jeremiah 31: 15 –17

2 Corinthians:3–7

Luke 6:35–38

Tuesday 1OT-I

19 December

19 December

cf. 21, 23 December

Friday 20OT-I

Saturday 20OT-I

Nativity of the Lord: Vigil

Sunday 20OT-A

cf. II:1324

Sunday 7OT-C

Acknowledgements

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