

Some thoughts for a Homily - Day for Life, 21st June 2026

There are times in most of our lives when we feel isolated and alone, as the prophet Jeremiah did, when it seemed that everybody was out to get him. Life can sometimes seem to spiral out of control and nothing anyone says or does seems able to make it better.

Parents, when they can find the words, speak of the awful emptiness they experience at the death of a child, at any age, born or unborn. Human life is so amazing and, in many ways so resilient. Yet it can be taken away, slowly over a number of weeks, or suddenly and without warning and we are left with our grief. We often hear it said that mothers and fathers experience the loss of a child differently. Even in that most intimate of relationships, feelings can be difficult to share.

Today, on this Day for Life, we want to acknowledge the pain and the sadness of parents in all our communities, who have lost a child, whether before or after birth. Parents will do anything to keep their children safe, but it is not always possible, and that is an awful reality. If, at times, you are angry with God, he understands better than you do yourself where that anger is coming from. The prophet Jeremiah frequently speaks angry words to God, and yet something deep down in him knows that God is on his side. At the end of our first reading today he says:

*Sing to the Lord,
praise the Lord,
for he has delivered the soul of the needy
from the hands of evil men.*

The loss of a child through abortion is different but it is still the loss of a child. There are those who would want us to believe that women sail through abortion and that men are not involved. Nothing could be further from the truth. The damage that is done is spiritual as well as physical and it needs to be healed. In the Gospel today, Jesus asks, "*can you not buy two sparrows for a penny*" and then he goes on to say "*yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows*". In this way, he reminds us that God is rich in mercy and compassion. Our children are not gone beyond his care, and neither are we beyond his capacity to heal and to reconcile.

In our responsorial psalm today, we prayed:

*This is my prayer to you,
my prayer for your favour.
In your great love, answer me, O God,
with your help that never fails:
Lord, answer, for your love is kind;
in your compassion, turn towards me.*

Let that be our prayer today for parents and for their children who have died. May God who created them in love and who sustained them in life for however short a space of time, keep them now in his care until the time comes for us to be gathered together in his love.