



California Catholic Conference

No On Prop 1 - Homily Helps
September 18 and October 2



“No” on Prop 1 - Homily Helps for September 18

Catholics United to Protect and Support Women, Children, and Families

Homily Theme: Catechetical Sunday – “This is my body, given for you.” The Eucharistic bread, consecrated and broken, is given for our salvation and for the life of the world (Jn 6:51). At this moment in history, the Eucharistic sacrifice leads us to prayer and action to defeat Proposition 1.

- Explanation of Prop 1 – what it does and why it is terrible. Description of the political process to defeat it – joining a broad coalition including some people with whom we disagree.
- Passing out and sharing Pew Cards, and encouraging sharing on social media or using it to talk to family and friends – even those who call themselves “pro-choice!”
- Importance of prayer – Novena (bulletin insert) and 40 Days for Life.

1st Reading: **Amos 8:4-7** – The Lord will remember those who trample on the needy and destroy the poor of the land!

Psalm 113 – Praise the Lord who lifts up the poor.

2nd Reading: **1 Timothy 2:1-8** – Unite together in prayer, praying especially for those in authority.

Gospel: **Lk 16:1-13** – The dishonest steward uses his master’s wealth for personal gain. “For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.”





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Note: Homilists are encouraged to use the outline indicated in the **[brackets]** to develop their own homily, sensitive to the needs of their congregation. The words that follow the brackets are sample messages that utilize theologically precise and politically effective language.

Homilists are encouraged to address this topic with great pastoral sensitivity, knowing how divisive the issue of abortion is in our society and among Catholics, as well as the struggles, passions, and woundedness that may be beneath the surface for the large number of parishioners who have had a personal experience with abortion.

Opposition to Prop 1 should be framed within a unifying message, avoiding the temptation to make the homily about the morality of abortion, abortion law in general, or even the Church’s teaching on human sexuality. There is a time and place for those lessons, but this homily is not it.

The focus needs to remain on Prop 1 and the choice it presents us between two terrible options: 1) a “No” vote keeps in place some of the most permissive state-level policies on abortion access in the country; or 2) a “Yes” vote makes unlimited late-term abortions a permanent right, at taxpayer expense. In that light, the choice is clear.



- **[Intro – Catechetical Sunday]** Today our Church throughout the country is celebrating Catechetical Sunday with the theme of “This is my body, given for you.” In the celebration of the Eucharist, we experience all of the central mysteries of our faith: the Incarnation, the action of the Holy Trinity, our redemption and salvation through the paschal sacrifice of Christ, our life as the mystical Body of Christ, the People of God... and so much more! Without a doubt, we are given in this Blessed Sacrament the literal food for a lifetime of catechetical instruction, and we are invited to grow in our understanding and appreciation of this mystery throughout our lives!
- **[The Lord lifts up the poor and needy]** At first glance, today’s first reading may seem disconnected from this theme. The prophet Amos denounced those who trample on the needy and destroy the poor, while the Psalm sings praise to the Lord for lifting up the poor. Pope Benedict XVI spelled out the prophetic connection between these Scripture readings and our celebration of the Eucharist, telling us that “Precisely because of the mystery we celebrate, we must denounce situations contrary to human dignity, since Christ shed his blood for all, and at the same time [we must] affirm the inestimable value of each individual person” (SC, 89).
- **[The Eucharist is given for the life of the world—through us, the Body of Christ on Earth!]** The sublime gift of the Eucharist builds on the grace of our rebirth in Baptism to strengthen and form us as the Body of Christ, given for the life of the world (Jn 6:51). In other words, it is precisely because of this gift we have received that we are called to prophetically defend the weak, the vulnerable, and those who cannot speak on their own behalf. The world around us does not always see things in this light, so we have a social and political responsibility to participate in the perfection of charity in our midst, working tirelessly for justice and the common good.
- **[Children of the light, called to defeat Prop 1]** In today’s Gospel, Jesus uses the example of a dishonest steward to draw a sharp contrast between the ways of the world and the criteria we use to shape the world we live in as children of the light. In that perspective, I want to talk to all of you today about something that I may not often address in my homilies, but which at this moment in history is both urgent and very necessary: I want to talk to you about how you will vote in this year’s election—in particular on Proposition 1 – the state’s attempt to secure unregulated abortion in California for all time.
- **[Caveat 1 – not partisan, not just based on faith]** Before I get into that, I want to state right up front two things: First, this is not a partisan message, nor is it grounded solely in our religious beliefs as Catholics. Catholics of all political affiliations are joining together with a broad coalition of Californians, including other Christians, people of non-Christian faiths, and people of no faith whatsoever, all of whom understand that Prop 1 is misleading and deserves to be defeated. As Catholics, we take seriously the responsibility to form our consciences to faithfully carry out our duties as citizens. When moral issues appear on the ballot in a non-partisan form, it is my pastoral duty to help you discern how the choices we are presented relate to our civic values of justice and the promotion of the common good, so that is what I am doing today.
- **[Caveat 2 – grounded in pastoral care]** Second, I want to make completely clear that our Church, founded on the teachings, example, and salvific mission of Jesus Christ, has nothing but compassion and care for women who find themselves facing an unexpected or difficult pregnancy or the women and men who have already experienced an abortion in their lives. **[A brief example of the care the Church provides in the local community could be mentioned here.]**



Jesus shows us that our merciful and loving God understands the desperation we may face at times in our lives, and we, the baptized, have been entrusted with the mission to help those in need and bring healing and forgiveness to the suffering. As a community, we were born ready through our Baptism to stand up and offer help and support both to those vulnerable to having an abortion and those seeking healing in its aftermath—because support changes everything!

- **[Prop 1 is unnecessary]** With that said, let's talk about the specifics of Prop 1 and how it relates to today's Gospel reading. As you all know, the sad reality in California is that pregnant women can get a legal abortion for any reason prior to fetal viability, as well as for the life and health of the mother after the point of fetal viability. That did not change in any way when the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade this summer—women in California still have the most access to abortion anywhere in the U.S., and the defeat of Prop 1 would not change that.
- **[Prop 1 is misleading]** What did change since the Supreme Court decision is that the abortion industry in California, which collects hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars, did precisely what the dishonest steward did in today's Gospel... they saw an opportunity to capitalize politically on the abortion issue in California, taking advantage of the common misperception that abortion rights are under threat from the Supreme Court's decision. So, they put forward Proposition 1 as a solution to a problem that does not exist.
- **[Three disastrous effects of Prop 1]** In fact, Proposition 1 actually does three things: 1) it will expand legal abortion to include late-term abortions up until just before birth—even if the mother and baby are healthy; 2) it will make it virtually impossible to ever restore that or any other common-sense limits on abortion in the future; and 3) it enshrines California as a so-called abortion “sanctuary” where women from other states can go to get expensive late-term abortions at no cost to themselves, paid for by California taxpayers. Worldwide, only China, Vietnam and South Korea currently have such an extreme nationwide policy allowing elective abortions without gestational limits—but even China is trying to discourage elective abortions!
- **[California as an abortion “sanctuary”]** If Proposition 1 passes, pregnant women from all over the country will seek out trips to California to obtain expensive late-term abortions—even just days or moments before what would otherwise be a healthy delivery! And taxpayers will be paying the bill. The law should instead be geared toward helping these women find the resources they need to welcome the gift of life, as well as equipping those who choose to keep their pregnancies for the responsibilities they will face.
- **[Let us take action as children of the light]** As I said earlier, the abortion industry has been as clever as a fox in its self-interest, like the dishonest steward who acted to preserve his income by immorally manipulating his master's debtors, at the master's expense. The abortion industry is well-funded and is ready to capitalize on the fear and doubt created by the overturning of Roe v. Wade. What they don't realize is that the children of the light—you and I—have the truth and justice on our side, and with God's help we stand in the way of their dishonest and unjust intentions. As Catholics, we are called to stand united with all Californians of goodwill— independents, Democrats, and Republicans alike—to defeat Prop 1 and to rally around pregnant women with the support and care they need to choose life on their own.



- **[A call to action]** Jesus tells us that as children of the light, we must be even more shrewd than the children of darkness and of the world. This means that we must get the word out about the truth of Prop 1. I know many of us may be uncomfortable talking politics, especially with people who see things differently from ourselves. The good news is that we are not at all alone. Though they may not be vocal about it, the vast majority of Californians agree with us that there should be common-sense limits on late-term abortions and on taxpayer funding for abortion— especially regarding women from other states!
- **[Get informed and get equipped]** With that in mind, I want to invite everyone to take one of the cards in the pews home. The message on these cards is simple, clear, and effective. It will unite us as Catholics, and it will join us with the majority of Californians who say “no” to the injustice of unregulated taxpayer-funded late-term abortions.
- **[Share the truth and ask for help]** We did not choose this fight, but we will not back down. It is up to all of us to do our part to help everyone in California understand the true impact Prop 1 will have if passed. You can use these cards as conversation starters... share them with friends and acquaintances, especially those who consider themselves “pro-choice,” because they are also our potential allies in this fight. You may also take a picture of the card or download the image and share it on social media. That takes courage and trust in God because not everyone will find our message appealing at first. But I honestly believe you will find that once they learn exactly what Prop 1 will do, many will understand that Prop 1 is not an answer to any problem. When that happens, invite them to join the fight to defeat Prop 1!
- **[Support the “NoonProposition1” Campaign]** I also want to encourage everyone to prayerfully consider contributing directly to the “No on Proposition 1” campaign—even if it is only a small amount. Our best efforts to share this message with our friends and neighbors will not reach everyone, so we need to work together with the coalition to place persuasive ads in media outlets throughout the state. Please do what you can.
- **[Vote]** Even so, all our efforts to shine the light of the Gospel on Prop1 will not come to fruition unless we also take the final step and vote. Make sure you are registered and then make a plan for how you will vote—whether by mail, at a drop box, or in person. After that, just do it! Let your voice be heard and encourage others to do the same.
- **[A call to prayer]** There is one more thing that must be said: even though our position in the fight against Prop 1 is not based primarily on our religious faith, we cannot neglect the power of our faith in the battle to defeat it. Today’s second reading from the letter to Timothy reminds us that we must constantly come together as one in prayer, especially to pray for those in public authority. So, I am joining with all our California bishops to encourage everyone to pray and fast for the defeat of Prop 1. In addition to the national ecumenical celebration of 40 Days for Life that starts on September 28, the bishops have organized a state-wide Novena to Our Lady of the Rosary to defeat Prop 1, starting on the feast of the Archangels on September 29 and ending on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on October 7. You can find the instructions for how to pray the Novena in the bulletin insert today, or at the entrances to the church. Please visit the website, where you will find a video message from one of our California bishops for each day of the Novena. Let us come together as one family to invoke the power of God through the intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary so that this misleading, expensive, and unnecessary law can be defeated. Amen!



Respect Life Sunday - Homily Helps for October 2

Catholics United to Protect and Support Women, Children, and Families

Homily Theme: Respect Life Sunday – “We Were Born Ready.”

- Reminder to pray, fast, and vote to defeat Prop 1 – see Novena (bulletin insert)
- Grow in our deep shared faith that God is in control and that all things work for the good for those who love God (Rom 8:28).
- We take up the call to make a difference in the world and in our community because “We Were Born Ready” for this!

1st Reading – **Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4:** In a world marked by destruction, violence, strife, and discord, the vision of the Lord is coming to fulfillment; it will not be late!

Psalms 95: If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

2nd Reading – **2 Tm 1:6-8, 13-14:** God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather of power and love and self-control. Do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, bearing your share of hardship for the

Gospel with the strength that comes from God!

Gospel – **Lk 17:5-10:** If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you!

Note: Homilists are encouraged to use the outline indicated in the [brackets] to develop their own homily, sensitive to the pastoral needs of their congregation. They should also be aware that some of the themes in this homily will be reiterated in the catechetical materials that will be used in the K-12 faith formation resources for this week. There will also be catechetical materials available for use with adults; those will have a stronger focus on efforts to defeat Prop 1, but will still weave together some themes from today’s readings. In this way, it is hoped that most parishioners will have an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the Church’s social mission and political advocacy, with particular application to important needs and issues that have arisen this year in California and the United States.



[Intro – Habakkuk as a prophet in times of turmoil] Today's first reading comes from the Prophet Habakkuk. He is one of the twelve minor prophets, and today is the only Sunday in our three-year liturgical cycle that we hear from him, but his message is especially pertinent for us today. Habakkuk's prophetic ministry took place around 600 years before the birth of Christ, at a time when the Southern Kingdom of Judah was being threatened from the Assyrian Empire that had already conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel, as well as from the rising power of the Babylonian Empire that was looming to take over both Judah and Assyria.

In the midst of such dangers, the King of Judah and the Israelite remnant that he ruled were in turmoil about how to handle the new threats. The corrupt King Joachim listened to false prophets and sought to appease the Babylonians by allowing worship of their gods. But God spoke to Habakkuk and gave him the message that Judah and Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Babylonians as a rebuke for the infidelity of the king. Naturally, Habakkuk was in great distress about the impending doom, and he questioned God's sense of justice in allowing the infidel Babylonians to have a devastating victory over God's chosen people.

That is where today's reading comes in. Habakkuk sees destruction, violence, strife and discord all around, but God assures him that it is not the end of the story. God has a plan, he is the Lord of history, and his justice and salvation will be fulfilled in due time, with the assurance that it will not be late!

[In a broken world, God is still in control] The parallels for us today in the United States are not difficult to see. New threats to the international order of the last 80 years are emerging from Russia and China, and our own people in the United States—and even in our Church!—are in being torn apart by political and media forces that profit from our anger, fear, and division. In our constitution, our founding fathers gave us a map “in order to form a more perfect union.” Yet more than 200 years later, that union feels more elusive than it has been perhaps since the time of the Civil War.

In the midst of this, some of our most cherished values are under attack in our own state, such as the fundamental dignity of human beings and their right to life at all stages of growth and development. I spoke to you a couple of weeks ago about Proposition 1, and I'd like to encourage you once more to study its devastating impact, pray for its defeat, and vote against it. There is information in the bulleting about that, and if you haven't already started the Novena to Our Lady of the Rosary or shared this info with friends and family, it's not too late, I encourage you to do so.

But what I want to say to you today is that even if we lose the fight on Prop 1, and even as the political, economic, and international interests seem to veer into chaos, God is still in control! That is the message we hear today from the prophet Habakkuk, and we have a much better vantage point on history than he did because we know what God has already done for us, in sending us his Son to offer his life on the cross for our salvation. His Resurrection is the guarantee that the victory of good over evil has already been won, and in the Eucharist we are given a foretaste of the promised eternal life that is God's free gift to all who are being saved by his merciful love and perfect justice. In his letter to the Romans, Saint Paul reminds us that “all things work for the good for those who love God.” (Rom 8:28) In other words, we cling to the faith that at the end of history, God will make all things new (Rev 21:5) and everything will be okay. So, when things are not going okay, that means we have not yet reached the end!



[With God all things are possible] That simple message brings us to today's Gospel. Jesus reminds us that if we had faith only the size of a mustard seed, we could command a sycamore tree to be uprooted and thrown into the sea, and it would happen! Jesus loves to make a point with seemingly unbelievable statements, but what he is saying has a deep religious truth because with God all things are possible. That is why the second reading today tells us that God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and love and self-control. We must never be ashamed of our testimony to the Lord, even if it means bearing a share of hardship for the Gospel, because as the letter to Timothy says, we do so "with the strength that comes from God!" And on the last day Jesus Christ himself will come to serve us at the Table of the Lord as he does every day in the Eucharist, and we will humbly say to him, "We have done what we were obliged to do."

[A commitment to serve] In the social context we are facing today, this means that we must act with an unshakeable faith that with God's help we will do the impossible by defeating Proposition 1—even if it passes! Because whether it passes or not, we are ready to do everything necessary to accompany pregnant and parenting women and families so that they may turn away from any fear they may experience around embracing the gift of life. We will not rest until every woman facing a difficult or unexpected pregnancy can see the light of hope and understand that abortion is not her only option. As early as January, our bishops in California made a promise that we as a Church will focus on service and advocacy to achieve that this year, and our parish is taking up that call by [\[talk to the Prop 1 Parish Captain, the Knights of Columbus, the parish catechetical leader, and other leaders in the community about what activities will be done during Respect Life Month, and highlight them here 1 \]](#). I want to encourage everyone to get involved in these activities this October, as part of our observance of Respect Life Month.

[We Were Born Ready] So let us not be afraid to fight the good fight against the injustices, destruction, strife, and turmoil we are seeing today. Let us not be ashamed to give testimony to our faith before others who often do not realize that they are supporting an injustice, such as in the case of Proposition 1. Let us work together and help those who find themselves in difficult and painful situations, needing support from a community that truly cares for their well-being. Let us not be deterred if there are setbacks along the way, because we know that God is in control. And above all, let us seek common ground with one another, rooted in our shared faith and mission to be leaven for the Kingdom of God in our world, until that last day when Jesus returns to right every wrong and wipe away every tear. Truly, by our Baptism, "We Were Born Ready" for this.

For some additional information about the response of our California bishops to the needs of our people today, see <https://cacatholic.org/sites/cacatholic/files/2022-01/CA-STMT-2022.pdf>.

¹ Some suggested activities can be found on the website: <https://www.wewerebornready.com/parish-resources> and <https://www.wewerebornready.com/knights>.