

“Prayer of the Faithful”

George Weigel was entirely accurate in characterizing the typical “Prayer of the Faithful” intentions as too liberal (CR, Aug. 9). It really makes you wonder about the people at the archdiocesan office who think these things up – their naivety toward the U.N. is particularly egregious.

Since Jan. 1, 1994, I have had a simple means of keeping track of whether I heard the word “abortion” or “unborn” in the intentions of the “Prayer of the Faithful.” It has happened 43 times in over 13 years, at 52 Sundays per year. That’s been about half and half in the archdioceses of Washington and Baltimore, with about 10 Sundays per year entirely elsewhere. It works out to around one-sixteenth of the time.

I conclude this isn’t just a local aberration, it’s a national pattern. I call that record dismal.

The organization Priests for Life publishes a booklet of suggested intentions that focus on the abortion issue, keyed to the Scripture readings for that Sunday. Apparently nobody uses that booklet. I suspect that’s because the office workers who think up intentions have grown weary of the multi-decade struggle to respect the innocent and defenseless unborn.

If Weigel’s criticism can get the attention of the American bishops, perhaps the “Prayer of the Faithful” will be adjusted to focus on the things that are really important.