

# Respect Life Prayer

## Opening Prayer

O God, our Creator, all life is in your hands from conception until death. Help us to reverence the awesome privilege of our share in creation. May all people live and die in dignity and love. Bless all those who defend life in all of its forms. Enlighten and be merciful toward those who fail to love, and give them peace. Let freedom be tempered by responsibility, integrity and morality. We ask this through Christ, our Lord, Amen



**Blessed Damien of Molokai**  
To be canonized Oct. 11, 2009

## First Reading

A Reading from the Book of Genesis (4:8-12)

Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out in the field." When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Then the LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" The LORD then said: "What have you done! Listen: your brother's blood cries out to me from the soil! Therefore you shall be banned from the soil that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. If you till the soil, it shall no longer give you its produce. You shall become a restless wanderer on the earth."

The Word of the Lord

**All: Thanks be to God**

## Reflection

The first reading tells us the story of Cain and Abel. In it, we are told we have a responsibility to protect life, that we are our "brother's keeper." Damien of Molokai lived out his sacred duty of ours to defend life in all of its forms. It is a sacred duty in which we all share.

## Reflection Questions

What are the many ways in which we serve as our "brother's keeper?" How is that different considering the different settings you find yourself in as a family member, as a classmate, as a member of your local community, and as a world citizen?

## Second Reading

A Reading from the Gospel According to St. Luke (10:29 –37)

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he

took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

The Gospel of the Lord  
**All: Thanks be to God**

### **Reflection**

All people, by the nature of their very creation, have immeasurable value and worth and should be treated with the dignity that they deserve as a creation of the Lord. Damien of Molokai treated even the undesirable lepers with compassion and mercy.

### **Reflection Question**

"And who is my neighbor?" Jesus identifies the act of being a neighbor as one who treats those in need with mercy. What are the choices that we can make – both smaller everyday decision as well as larger value statements – that help to build a “culture of life” around us?

### **Closing Prayer**

Loving God,

We are thankful for your love. In all we say, all we do, and who we are, may we remember that we are witnesses of your love in the world. May the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen us to make positive decisions and communicate your love. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**