



The Christmastide feasts and festivals give us an opportunity to contemplate various sanctity of life truths. Consider the following examples (this list is not exhaustive, and you will likely think of others):

The Nativity of our Lord – The Son takes on human flesh and becomes one of us, to die on the Cross to atone for our sins and rise again to declare us right with the Father. Christ is born in abject poverty, thus identifying and empathizing with those who are lowly and downtrodden. The angels declare “... on earth peace among men, with whom He is pleased;” note that the hymn writer Charles Wesley (1707-1788) so beautifully reminds us that this peace is none other than “God and sinners reconciled!” (LSB 380.1). All lives indeed matter to God!

St. Stephen, Martyr – God cares about the physical and spiritual needs of His people. When the Church helps provide human care through her deacons, elders, or other volunteers, she always includes a proclamation of Christ and Him-crucified, thus addressing the needs for both temporal and eternal life. As our Lord was persecuted, we can expect the same for the good confession of the faith. With certain hope of our bodily resurrection on the last day, we can die at peace, no matter how violent the circumstances of our death. Furthermore, we are free to forgive those who have persecuted us, praying that they too will be saved, proclaim the Gospel to others, and live eternally with us in Christ.

St. John, Apostle and Evangelist – John wrote his gospel, epistles, and revelation as an elderly man. Through all his writings, John points us to Christ, the source of our lives, both temporal and eternal. While we sin and deserve to die, when we confess our sins and ask His forgiveness, God absolves us through our pastors, bringing us back to life. As forgiven ones, we have fellowship with each other as we partake in the fellowship within the Triune Godhead. John’s long life was a gift to him from Jesus, who used him to richly gift His Church through the ages, all to His glory. Furthermore, the elderly in our own midst are God’s gifts to us and indispensable members of our fellowship.

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs – King Herod killed the male children two and under in Bethlehem and the surrounding region, as he perceived one among them as having been born king of the Jews, and a potential threat to his power. Their lives mattered to their families and continue to matter to God, and to His Church. Throughout human history, people have aborted and exposed unplanned (by them), inconvenient and unwanted children. These lives, too, matter to God, who sent His Son to escape Herod’s wrath, to die another day for these children, for those who put them to death, and for us all. And with repentance, there is forgiveness at the foot of Jesus’ Cross.

Christmas 1 – Simeon, through the work of the Holy Spirit, recognized the infant Jesus as the One appointed “for the fall and rising of many in Israel...” Every infant in our midst matters to God, and He has plans for each one of them! Furthermore, although not called to be pastors, women do matter, even those who like Anna are descended from one of the lost tribes of the Northern Kingdom (c.f. 2 Kings 17). Jesus came to die for them, too, as He did for all people! And once again we are also reminded that the elderly in our midst are indispensable.

Circumcision and Name of Jesus – At our birth, we are given names indicating who we are because each of us is important. Furthermore, in Baptism, God puts His name on us, indicating who we are in Him; namely, saved and redeemed members of His Body (c.f. Matthew 1:21). Finally, in His shedding drops of blood in His circumcision, the infant Jesus began keeping the Law perfectly on our behalf, so that when God looks at us, He sees His perfection in us.

Christmas 2 – God has ordained the office of parents, through whom He brings children into the world, and feeds, nurtures, and protects them. Jesus was protected and nurtured by His earthly parents as an infant, a 12-year-old, and indeed throughout His childhood. Furthermore, He kept the 4th Commandment perfectly, honoring His earthly parents out of deep love for His heavenly Father.

The Epiphany of our Lord – The visit of the Magi illustrates that Gentiles too are included in our Lord’s plan of salvation. All lives matter to Him!

Indeed, like every Sunday, Feast and Festival Day, and every day in the Church Year, the Christmastide season boldly proclaims the truth of the sanctity of all human life from fertilization to forever. Your English District Lifeline Team thanks God for your Gospel-motivated voices for life and prays His richest blessings on you and your congregations throughout the New Year.