



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
**DIOCESE**  
**OF CHARLESTON**

SECRETARIAT OF COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

## September Toolkit – *Homily Helps*

### 1. **Month of Our Lady of Sorrows** (*Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows*) - *Sept. 1*

- During this month of Our Lady of Sorrows, we remember the seven sorrows that Mary endured in her life. She suffered alongside her son Jesus and experienced immense pain and grief as she watched him undergo crucifixion and death. Through her suffering, Mary remained faithful and obedient to God's will.
- We read in the Gospel of Luke: “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted, and you yourself a sword will pierce so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (2:34-35).
- Mary's sorrows remind us that suffering is an inevitable part of life. We all experience pain and loss at some point in our lives. We can find strength and hope in our faith, knowing that God is always with us, as she did.
- Despite all the trials she faced, Mary remained resilient in her faith. She never lost hope or turned away from God, but instead trusted in his plan for her life. In the face of adversity, we too can cultivate resilience and trust in God's plan for us.
- Mary's sorrows offer us comfort and solace in our own struggles. She is our mother, and we can turn to her in times of trouble and seek her intercession.
- Her suffering also calls us to cultivate compassion for others. When we see others in pain, we can give our support and love, as Mary did for her son on the way to Calvary.
- Our Lady of Sorrows reminds us that the Christian life is one of sacrifice. We are to offer our lives in service to God and others. Through our sacrifices, we can help bring about the kingdom of God on earth and draw closer to him.
- From St. John Paul II: “Turn your eyes incessantly to the Blessed Virgin; she, who is the Mother of Sorrows and also the Mother of Consolation, can understand you completely and help you. Looking to her, praying to her, you will obtain that your tedium will become serenity, your anguish change into hope, and your grief into love.”

### 2. **Attentiveness to God’s Plan** - *September*

- As Catholics, we believe that God has a plan for every person. This plan may not always be clear to us, but we can trust that God has our best interests at heart. As the Creator, he knows us better than we know ourselves.
- To discern God's plan for our lives, we must listen to his voice by spending time in prayer and reflection and being open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.
- We don't discern God's plan for our lives alone. We need the support and guidance of our parish communities and families to help us.

- When we discern God's plan for our lives, it may not always make sense to us. But we must trust in his wisdom and goodness, even when we don't understand.
- We read in the book of Proverbs, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, on your own intelligence do not rely; in all your ways be mindful of him, and he will make straight your paths” (3:5-6).
- God's plan may sometimes require us to step out of our comfort zones and embrace change. This can be difficult, but we must remember that God is guiding us every step of the way.
- Jesus' life on earth was a perfect example of attentiveness to God's plan. He always followed the Father's will, even when it meant suffering and sacrifice. We must surrender ourselves completely to his will, letting go of our own desires and trusting in his.
- St. Josemaria Escriva: “Abandonment to the will of God is the secret of happiness on earth. Say, then: *meus cibus est, ut faciam voluntatem ejus*, **my food is to do his will.**”
- God's plan for us is to use our talents and abilities to serve others and bring about his kingdom on earth. We make our lives a gift to God and to those around us and by cultivating virtue. This means avoiding distractions and temptations that might lead us astray.
- Ultimately, God's plan for us is rooted in his love. He wants what is best for us, and his plan will lead us to fulfillment and joy. By embracing his love, we can better discern his plan for our lives and live it out to the fullest.

### 3. Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross - Sept. 14

- The feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross commemorates the finding of the True Cross by St. Helena in about 326 AD. The feast day used to be referred to as “Triumph of the Cross.” This day is not only celebrated by Catholics, but also Orthodox Christians and even some sects of Protestantism.
- The cross is not merely a symbol of suffering and death, but also of God's great love for us. It was through the cross that Jesus showed us the depth of his love and the lengths to which he was willing to go to redeem us.
- As Christians, we are called to take up our own crosses and follow Christ. This means embracing the struggles and challenges of life and offering them up to God in union with Christ's sacrifice on the cross.
- St. Paul wrote to the Galatians, “I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me” (2:19-20).
- The cross reminds us that even during suffering and adversity, there is hope. Christ's victory over sin and death gives us the assurance that even our greatest trials will one day be transformed into something beautiful.
- The cross beckons us to humble service and self-sacrifice, and to seek redemption for our sins and those of the world. By embracing the cross and turning to Christ in faith and repentance, we find forgiveness and healing.
- The cross is a mystery that we will never fully comprehend in this life. By meditating on its meaning and significance, we can grow closer to Christ and deepen our relationship with him.

- Finally, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross reminds us to live a life of gratitude for the gift of salvation that Christ won for us through his death and resurrection. We can show our gratitude by living lives of service and self-sacrifice, and by sharing the love of Christ with others.
- To close with the words of St. Maximilian Kolbe, “The cross is the school of love.”

#### **4. Memorial of St. Pius of Pietrelcina - Sept. 23**

- Francesco Forgione, better known as Padre Pio, was an Italian Franciscan friar who lived from 1887-1968. He was canonized by St. John Paul II in 2002.
- St. Pius was known for his deep prayer life and devotion to God. He spent hours each day in prayer, and his example inspires us to cultivate a closer relationship with God through prayer and reflection.
- Padre Pio lived with chronic physical pain throughout his life, but he saw his suffering as an opportunity to unite himself with Christ's sufferings on the cross.
- He received the gift of stigmata, bearing the wounds of Christ on his own body. This miraculous event was a sign of God's love for him and a powerful testimony to the reality of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.
- The Franciscan spent many hours each day hearing confessions, and he placed great importance on this sacrament. His example encourages us to seek out the healing power of confession and to approach it with humility and sincerity.
- St. Padre Pio had a deep devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, often referring to her as his "heavenly mother." His example inspires us to cultivate our own relationship with Mary and seek her intercession in our prayers.
- St. Pius of Pietrelcina: “How can the mother of Jesus, present at the foot of the Cross on Calvary, who offered her Son as Victim for the salvation of souls, be absent at the mystical Calvary of the altar?”
- Despite his many spiritual gifts and miraculous experiences, Padre Pio remained humble throughout his life. His example challenges us to embrace humility in our own lives and to recognize that all good things come from God.
- As we celebrate the feast day of St. Padre Pio, we are called to continue his legacy of prayer, humility, and compassion.
- To close with his words, “A good heart is always strong, it suffers, but with tears it is consoled by sacrificing itself for its neighbor and for God.”

#### **5. Feast of Sts. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, the Archangels - Sept. 29**

- The archangels are the only three angels mentioned by name in the Bible. Traditionally, this was the feast day for St. Michael, or Michaelmas.
- St. Raphael’s task is to lead and guide. He guided and protected Tobiah during the man’s search to find a cure for his father, Tobit. “I will go with him. Do not fear. In good health we will leave you, and in good health we will return to you, for the way is safe” (Tb 5:16).
- St. Raphael is the patron saint of travelers, blind people, nurses, pharmacists, physicians and people who are ill.
- St. Michael is a great defender and protector of the Church, and his feast day reminds us of the spiritual battle that we face as each day. In the Bible, he’s mentioned in Jude and Daniel, and then New Testament continues to reveal his role as a champion for

God. We read about this in the book of Revelations, “Then war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels battled against the dragon. The dragon and its angels fought back, but they did not prevail and there was no longer any place for them in heaven” (12:7-8).

- St. Michael is the patron saint of grocers, soldiers, doctors, mariners, first responders and police. He is the guardian of the Church.
- St. John Paul II: “The battle against the devil, which is the principal task of Saint Michael the Archangel, is still being fought today, because the devil is still alive and active in the world.”
- St. Gabriel is the angel of the Annunciation. He is the messenger to those who are favored by God. He is mentioned in the Book of Daniel and announces himself by name when speaking with Zechariah (Lk 1:19-20). Gabriel also tells St. Joseph in a dream to flee to Egypt.
- Gabriel is the patron saint of messengers, telecommunication workers, radio broadcasters and postal workers.
- St. John Chrysostom: “Consider how august a privilege it is, when angels are present, and archangels throng around, when cherubim and seraphim encircle with their blaze the throne, that a mortal may approach with unrestrained confidence, and converse with heaven's dread Sovereign! O, what honor was ever conferred like this?”