

# MISSION INTENTIONS

NOVEMBER 2024-2025

Let us pray that all parents who mourn the loss of a son or daughter find support in their community, and that the Holy Spirit gives them peace of heart.

## Country Focus: Somalia



Sadly, many parents in Somalia know the pain of losing a child. Somalia has one of the highest child mortality rates in the world, due to malnutrition, lack of safe drinking water, proper sanitation, and disease.

Although there are very few Catholics in Somalia, the Roman Catholic Church, through Catholic Relief Services (CRS), has been offering assistance to Somali parents and children in need on an off since 1964. One of ways they assist Somali citizens is funding health care clinics, making it easier for mothers and young children to receive necessary medical care. These clinics provide vitamin supplements, immunizations, and educational health sessions on proper hygiene and nutrition. Patients may also receive a hygiene kit that includes soap and tablets used to purify water. Let us pray these efforts will continue so fewer Somali parents will have to mourn the loss of a child.

## Leading to Knowledge of the Faith

Losing a loved one, particularly a child, is very difficult. However, there are things we can do to help stop children from dying unnecessarily, including working to address things that threaten children's lives such as poverty and hunger. In fact, we have a moral obligation to address these issues. The 1965 Second Vatican Council document Gaudium et Spes, *The Church in the Modern World*, teaches us that "God, who has a parent's care for all of us, desired that all men and women should form one family and deal with each other as brothers and sisters...Love of God and of one's neighbor, then, is the first and greatest commandment" (no. 24). We will learn more about this on the second page of this newsletter.

## Saint Spotlight

We know very little about many of the saints, especially those from the earliest centuries. Saint Felicitas of Rome is one of these saints of whom we know very little. The one thing we know for sure about Saint Felicitas, besides that she died for her faith, is the date and location of her burial: the Cemetery of Maximus, on November 23, year unknown.

The rest of Saint Felicitas' story has been handed down verbally and through legend. Tradition has it that Saint Felicitas was born in Rome around 100 AD. Her husband was said to be a wealthy merchant, and Saint Felicitas a noble woman. Saint Felicitas was very dedicated to her faith, raising her seven sons to be devoted Catholics. After her husband's untimely death, she continued in her acts of charity, feeding and clothing the poor, and helping convert many people.



## Saint Felicitas of Rome

Unfortunately, she lived during a time when being a Christian was illegal in Rome. Her many acts of charity and constant witness of faith started to attract the attention of the wrong people. Some pagan priests eventually reported her to the emperor for heresy.

Saint Felicitas and all seven of her sons were brought before the emperor, who demanded that each of them give up their Christian faith and worship the pagan gods instead. They all refused, so the emperor ordered that the entire family be executed. Saint Felicitas' sons were martyred first, but her faith in Christ gave her peace knowing her sons were gaining eternal life with God. Saint Felicitas herself is believed to have been martyred several months after her sons, on November 23, the same day we now celebrate her feast day. ***Saint Felicitas of Rome, pray for us!***

## Formation for Life in Christ

The core principle of Catholic Social Teaching is the sanctity of human life. Each person is created by God, meaning every human life is sacred and must be protected from “womb to tomb,” or from conception to natural death. Most people are familiar with the Church’s teaching on important right-to-life issues such as abortion and euthanasia. As Catholics, we have an obligation to defend the lives of the most vulnerable, like the unborn and elderly, who cannot or might not be able to defend themselves. We also need to protect life from other evils that threaten its dignity, such as poverty, malnutrition, and war.

The 1965 Second Vatican Council document *Gaudium et Spes*, *The Church in the Modern World*, makes this clear when it states, “...whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder...whatever violates the integrity of the human person...whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions...disgraceful working conditions, where [people] are treated as mere tools for profit...all these things and others of their like...poison human society...Moreover, they are supreme dishonor to the Creator” (no. 27). As Catholics, our call to defend human life means that we must protect life at all stages and in all circumstances. We must work to eliminate anything that is a threat to a person’s life or dignity. In addition to fighting for the rights of the unborn and elderly, this also includes

helping those living in poverty, ensuring that all have access to necessary healthcare, and caring for creation so that the Earth’s resources are available to all, both now and in the future. Many Church documents remind us of this, including Pope Benedict XVI’s 2005 encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, *God is Love*, when he writes “Within the community of believers there can never be room for a poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life,” (no. 20), and in Saint John Paul II’s 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, *The Gospel of Life*, when he states, “...our support and promotion of human life must be accomplished through the service of charity...In helping the hungry, the thirsty, the foreigner, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned—as well as the child in the womb and the old person who is suffering or near death—we have the opportunity to serve Jesus...the service of charity...cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation...” (no. 87).

In this month’s video, we will learn how Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is helping fight malnutrition in Rwanda. As you watch the video, think about how this effort relates to this month’s prayer petition. How does addressing issues like hunger and poverty also protect life?



## Celebrating the Mystery

Have you ever had to face the loss of a loved one? What did your friends and neighbors do to support you and your family during this time? Perhaps they prayed for you or provided meals. Taking care of others is something parents are called to teach their children, so that we might be ready to help others in their time of need.

Through the Sacrament of Marriage, families learn to help their communities. When we experience a good family life, we learn to see others as children of God. We learn how to be in relationship with others through our healthy relationships in our families. As Pope Francis wrote in his 2016 Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, “*On Love in the Family*,” the family “introduces fraternity into the world (no. 194). How has your family taught you to care for others?

### Teaching Prayer: The Pope’s Prayer Intentions

The best thing we can do for someone who is grieving the loss of a loved one is to pray for them. In addition to praying this month’s prayer intention at school or faith formation, you may also include it in your private prayers or your family prayer time. In fact, the Pope’s Prayer Intentions are a great resource for many prayer needs. These intentions are meant to be a “global call to transform our prayers into ‘concrete actions,’ serving as a compass for a mission of compassion for the world. To learn more, [click here](#).

## Introduction to Community Life: Hungering for a Healthy Start

- ✚ How does your parish community support parishioners grieving the loss of a child?
- ✚ How does working to end issues like hunger and poverty relate to this month’s prayer petition?
- ✚ What can you do to address the issues of hunger and poverty in your community?