

Integral Faith

"Homily helps and liturgy resources highlighting care for our common home."



Homily Helps and Petitions for the 15th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A (July 16, 2023)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Isaiah 55: Just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful ... so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth ... achieving the end for which I sent it.

Psalms 65: You have crowned the year with your bounty, and your paths overflow with a rich harvest.

Romans 8: All creation is groaning with labor pains even until now ... we also groan within ourselves as we wait for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Matthew 13: But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.

† Comments for the Day:

Isaiah the prophet proclaims that God's word is life-giving and effective. By God's word we humans are given the abundance of nature: rain and snow for water, air to breathe, and soil that nurtures the many plants we eat. God's word must also be implanted in our hearts so that we live attuned to the many ways God speaks to us.

Paul writes that Jesus Christ came to liberate humanity from the corruption that Adam and Eve brought into creation. Following Christ requires suffering and we "groan with labor pains" to give birth to a new creation. Our adoption as daughters and sons of God makes us part of the family of God and calls to live so the word of God lives in us.

Jesus' metaphor of the seeds describes the ways we fail to listen to God's word. Forgetting God's command to "till the earth and keep it" has led to earth's climate being disrupted from clearcutting of forests for corporate agriculture, fossil fuels for transportation and construction, and pesticides made from petroleum and other chemicals.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminds us that, as caretakers of God's garden on earth, we are called to responsible stewardship of the planet and all of creation. By fulfilling this call, we can help the earth "bear fruit and yield a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold," while also bearing fruit through faith in action.

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:

We know how important these [rainforests] are for the entire earth and for the future of humanity. The ecosystems of tropical forests possess an enormously complex biodiversity which is almost impossible to appreciate fully. Yet when these forests are burned down or leveled for purposes of cultivation, within the space of a few years countless species are lost and the areas frequently become arid wastelands. (38)

Modernity has been marked by an excessive anthropocentrism which today, under another guise, continues to stand in the way of shared understanding and of any effort to strengthen social bonds. . . . our “dominion” over the universe should be understood more properly in the sense of responsible stewardship. (116)

Economies of scale, especially in the agricultural sector, end up forcing smallholders to sell their land or abandon their traditional crops To ensure economic freedom from which all can effectively benefit, restraints occasionally have to be imposed on those possessing greater resources and financial power. To claim economic freedom while real conditions bar many people from access to it . . . is to practise a doublespeak which brings politics into disrepute. (129)

The principle of the maximization of profits, frequently isolated from other considerations, reflects a misunderstanding of the very concept of the economy. As long as production is increased, little concern is given to whether it is at the cost of future resources or the health of the environment; as long as the clearing of a forest increases production, no one calculates the losses entailed in the desertification of the land, the harm done to biodiversity or the increased pollution. (195)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we join others in caring for creation by, for example, advocating to reduce use of fossil fuels and pesticides, let us pray to the Lord . . .

Option 2: That governments pass legislation to curb the overreach of giant corporations, particularly those that harm the environment, let us pray to the Lord . . .

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

Webpage: www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help

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