

Integral Faith

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



Homily Helps and Petitions for the 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle A (26 July 2020)

Homily Helps

† Comment for the day:

Today's first reading invites us to reflect on Solomon's response to God, who offers to grant him whatever he desires. Rather than asking for more wealth or military power, Solomon asks God for an understanding heart so that he can lead his people with wisdom and justice. How well does each one of us measure up to Solomon's standard? What value do we attach to wisdom? What value do we attach to acting wisely in our roles within our family, our community, and our Church?

Acting wisely demands that we step back from situations and ask what course of action truly heralds justice and mercy. Authentic wisdom involves the capacity to see the overall picture and to take into account how interconnected and interdependent all things are. This is true not just on the physical plane but also on the spiritual. As Christian leaders – whether we are lay or ordained, male or female, young or old – we are called to nurture the gift of wisdom and vision God has given to each one of us.

Such wisdom can enable us to see all creation itself in a new way. Our society is used to treating the earth carelessly, as if it were a mere source of raw material. Wisdom calls us to broaden our perspective. Our faith teaches us that first and foremost creation is a primary source of God's revelation to us. It teaches us to see all creatures as fellow companions in a common journey towards the fullness of life in God.

For pastors and teachers, today's Gospel provides a wonderful opportunity to draw on our human experiences of wonder, awe, beauty, and the goodness of God's creation. The words of Pope Francis about the Gospel of Creation enable us to appreciate the depth of the Gospel in new ways.

By rejecting a purely materialistic, utilitarian reductionist view of God's earth and, instead, embracing the emerging wisdom about the deeper meaning of God's creation, we follow the example of King Solomon, the prophets, saints, and, of course, Jesus Himself. He who preached about the Kingdom of Heaven being like a treasure hidden in a field is leading us to discover the treasure of the Catholic Social Teaching. Ours is a theology of incarnation, where God infuses the material world with his own divine life and purpose. The Social Teachings of the Church calls us to adopt a fundamental option for the poor, to entertain a sacramental appreciation of Creation, and to work as stewards in the Vineyard of the Lord. If we operate on the basis of God's wisdom, the wisdom that Solomon sought, as evangelists we will further the "in-breaking" of the Kingdom.

Homily Helps (cont.)

† Scripture passages to note:

1 Kings 3: God said (to Solomon), "Ask something of me and I will give it to you." He answered: "O LORD, give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge your people."

Matthew 13: "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

Passages from *Laudato Si'* to note:

The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. (#84)

The New Testament does not only tell us of the earthly Jesus and his tangible and loving relationship with the world. It also shows him risen and glorious, present throughout creation by his universal Lordship: "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col 1:19-20). This leads us to direct our gaze to the end of time, when the Son will deliver all things to the Father, so that "God may be everything to everyone" (1 Cor 15:28). Thus, the creatures of this world no longer appear to us under merely natural guise because the risen One is mysteriously holding them to himself and directing them towards fullness as their end. The very flowers of the field and the birds which his human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued with his radiant presence. (#100)

Everything is interconnected, and genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others. (#70)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That God may grant us an understanding heart so that we recognize how interdependent we humans are with all of Earth's community of life, let us pray to the Lord....

Option 2: For those who long to see a more just and harmonious world but, instead, feel disappointed and cynical about what is going on around them, may they discover the great treasure of Catholic Social Teachings and use it as a tool to transform the face of the earth, let us pray to the Lord....

Further Resources

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