

Integral Faith

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



Catholic Climate Covenant™
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

Homily Helps and Petitions for the 19th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A (August 13, 2023)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

1 Kings 19: After the fire here was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Matthew 14: At once Jesus spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

† Comments for the Day:

Who among us isn't taken aback in the face of abject poverty and homelessness, the evident effects of individualism, selfishness, and greed?

In Matthew's Gospel this week, we find an image of the Christian community. The boat and the disciples represent our own frail community. The surrounding water is the world, and the wind and waves are the turmoil which threaten our fragile world. Our natural environment, as well as the society surrounding us, deteriorate together; they are not isolated one from another. We have learned that we cannot combat environmental ruin without also attending to human and social deprivation.

Jesus spends time praying alone – for you and me, and for our world and all it encompasses. This might seem to indicate a sense of distance, but Jesus' appearance in the midst of the storm, at the core of our conflicts, dispels our doubts: God is close, present in all our relationships: with Him, with others, and with creation. The disciples were struggling at sea much as we contend with the urge toward individualism and indifference in the face of misery. Amid this heightened anxiety the disciples were not able to recognize the Lord's presence.

The hand of God reaches out; it is a human hand. Jesus reaches out to guide us, steady us, support us – all the things that the touch of a hand can do. His kindly compassionate hand reaches out to make contact with us, to let us know we are not alone, to lift us up. The hand of God is even in the simple and mundane events of our life.

Once Jesus steps inside the boat, there is calm: not only because the surrounding storm has stopped, but also because of the peace that the awareness of His presence brings. That peace is God's passion, longing and heartfelt desire. Jesus came that we might flourish and have life in abundance in the present time, in anticipation of full life in eternity. That vision of life to the full depends on our willingness to go out of ourselves to enter into communion with God, with others, and with creation itself.

This resource is provided by Catholic Climate Covenant in collaboration with the Integral Faith Team, a group of male and female religious, priests, and lay people dedicated to serving the Church.

As Pope Francis' emphasizes in *Laudato Si'*, everything is interconnected, interrelated, and interdependent. Communion begins here and now. Let us be encouraged by the whisper and overcome our natural fear so we can take a step forward today, to collaborate with God in building a better world for all.

† **Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:**

The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet: "Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest". (48)

We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*. (49)

If the present ecological crisis is one small sign of the ethical, cultural and spiritual crisis of modernity, we cannot presume to heal our relationship with nature and the environment without healing all fundamental human relationships.... Our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God. (119)

Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity . . . social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a "culture of care" which permeates all of society. (231)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we may be ever mindful of our true place in nature as members of a vast interdependent community that includes many species and ecosystems, all created by God to reflect His purposes and glory, let us pray to the Lord....

Option 2: That we may come to see the glory of God reflected in the gentlest of breezes and the humblest of creatures, let us pray to the Lord....

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

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

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