

# 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 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A (September 10, 2023)

### Homily Helps

#### † Scripture Passages to Note:

**Ezekiel 33:** I have appointed watchman for the house of Israel; when you hear me say anything, you shall warn them for me. If I tell the wicked, "O wicked one, you shall surely die," and you do not speak out to dissuade the wicked from his way ... I will hold you responsible for his death.

**Psalms 95:** If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

**Romans 13:** "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

**Matthew 18:** "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault ... For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

#### † Comments for the Day:

In the first reading from Ezekiel, God's faithful servants are to call evildoers to account for their actions, lest even the messenger be responsible for the fate of the wicked. God charges His people to advise, out of love, those who sin to turn from their ways.

This theme continues throughout this Sunday's readings. Psalm 95 invites us to be open to God's voice. This can be conveyed through a "watchman" like a friend or priest, but also in more subtle ways, like through an interior calling or even signs in nature. Then, Paul's letter to the Romans reiterates Jesus' overarching commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself. And Matthew's Gospel calls us to counsel those brothers and sisters who sin to make amends.

Pope Francis, as our Holy Father, has embraced his duty as "watchman" to warn us of our sinfulness. This is especially true in *Laudato Si'*, where he pulls no punches in calling out those who disregard and even harm God's creation. Unfortunately, since the environment sustains all life, harming or otherwise disrespecting it results in harm and even death to others.

This has been most striking with this summer's heat, wildfires, and floods. Burning fossil fuels that drives climate change, and resource consumption that leads to deforestation and drought, negatively impacts our planet – "our common home." Tragically, those most impacted by climate change and pollution are the poor and most vulnerable – those who have contributed least to the problem.

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.

If we're honest with ourselves, we are all incrementally complicit in contributing to environmental degradation that collectively harms life itself. We, who are first-and-foremost called to love our brothers and sisters, often overlook the impact that our daily actions, large and small, have on the environment. Like the scientists who warned us about climate change decades ago, Pope Francis warned us over 8 years ago about the impacts of our high-consumption lifestyles on "our common home." But have we listened to the call to love one another by loving creation?

"If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts ..."

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

Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. (25)

The pace of consumption, waste, and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes, such as those which even now periodically occur in different areas of the world. The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. (161)

Disinterested concern for others, and the rejection of every form of self-centeredness and self-absorption, are essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment. These attitudes also attune us to the moral imperative of assessing the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us. (208)

Some committed and prayerful Christians ... ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an "ecological conversion," whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. (217)

Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of ... social love [that] 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 the commandment to love one another may foster love for God's creation that sustains all life, let us pray to the Lord....

**Option 2:** That God may give us the courage to serve as watchmen to call out those who harm the environment, God's creation, to turn from sin, let us pray to the Lord....

## Further Resources

**Feedback:** [info@catholicclimatecovenant.org](mailto:info@catholicclimatecovenant.org)

**Webpage:** [www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help)

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