

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 24th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle C (September 11, 2022)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Exodus 32: The LORD said to Moses, ... "They have soon turned aside from the way I pointed out to them, making for themselves a molten calf and worshiping it, sacrificing to it and crying out, 'This is your God, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!'" ... But Moses implored the LORD, ... "Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and how you swore to them by your own self, saying, 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky; and all this land that I promised, I will give your descendants as their perpetual heritage.'"

Psalm 51: Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness; in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.

1 Timothy 1: I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and arrogant, but I have been mercifully treated because I acted out of ignorance in my unbelief. Indeed, the grace of our Lord has been abundant, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Luke 15: [The younger son] squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation.... Coming to his senses he thought, ... "I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.'"

† Comments for the Day:

Today's reading from Exodus confronts us as the Lord confronted the people of Israel, who were chosen by God and delivered from slavery and oppression. Yet they debased themselves by worshiping a molten calf, squandering the spiritual gifts that came from their special relationship with their creator. God shared with Moses His divine wrath against the people, an expression of the depth of God's deeply personal, unrequited love – passionate but patient. In the end, God held out mercy, allowing the people of Israel to regain their senses and be reconciled with Him.

Today's Psalm 51 and Paul's First Letter to Timothy echo similar themes: the recognition of human sin and folly, the desire for God's forgiveness and healing, and the grateful celebration of God's infinite mercy.

Luke's gospel story of the Prodigal Son offers a lens for thinking about the way we have mistreated the earth, and by extension harmed our relationship with our creator. The younger son's insistence on receiving his inheritance mirrors the demands of adolescent humanity using

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up the earth and its resources in a short-sighted and self-centered way. Our lack of wisdom and profligate lifestyle of hyper-consumption has resulted in a massive extinction of plant and animal species. The oceans are dying, the rainforests are being destroyed, and our climate is changing. We are squandering our inheritance of creation, and renouncing our stewardship of it.

Now, like the younger son, we find ourselves wallowing in a poisonous and degraded biosphere. Fortunately, there are indications that we human beings – like the Prodigal Son – are beginning to come to our senses. In his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis has framed the ecological challenge we face by raising questions that are both environmental and profoundly human. The fact that people of diverse beliefs and political persuasion have praised the encyclical is a sign of hope that may very well lead us to our own homecoming.

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

[Earth] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her.... The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (*Rom 8:22*). (2)

What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? . . . what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn. (160)

Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth. 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. . . . The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. We need to reflect on our accountability before those who will have to endure the dire consequences. (161)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That Pope Francis' call for moral responsibility to care for our common home will find fertile ground in our hearts for a brighter future for our children, let us pray to the Lord....

Option 2: That, as we become more aware of how our consumer lifestyles are affecting the planet and the poor, we will repent and long for our Father's mercy, let us pray to the Lord....

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

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

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