

Integral Faith

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



Catholic Climate Covenantsm
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

Homily Resources and Petitions for the 27th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle C (October 6, 2019)

Homily Helps

† Scripture passages to note:

Habakkuk 1,2: Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and clamorous discord... Then the LORD answered me and said: Write down the vision clearly... For the vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint.

2 Timothy 1: I remind you, to stir into flame the gift of God that you have... For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control.

Luke 17: If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it would obey you... Put on your apron and wait on me...

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to note:

The spiral of self-destruction engulfs us... I have attempted to take stock of our present situation pointing to the cracks in the planet that we inhabit as well as to the profoundly human causes of environmental degradation. (#163)

For new models of progress to arise, there is a need to change "models of global development"... It is not enough to balance, in the medium term, the protection of nature with financial gain, or the preservation of the environment with progress. Halfway measures simply delay the inevitable disaster. Put simply, it is a matter of redefining our notion of progress. A technological and economic development which does not leave in its wake a better world and an integrally higher quality of life cannot be considered progress. (#194)

Taking advantage of abundant solar energy will require the establishment of mechanisms and subsidies which allow developing countries access to technology transfer, technical assistance and financial resources, but in a way which respects their concrete situations... The costs of this would be low, compared to the risks of climate change. In any event, these are primarily ethical decisions, rooted in solidarity between all peoples. (#172)

It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation. The Lord comes not from above, but from within, he comes that we might find him in this world of ours. In the Eucharist, fullness is already achieved; it is the living center of the universe... Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love... The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation... In the bread of the Eucharist, "creation is projected towards divinization, towards the holy wedding feast, towards unification with the Creator himself". Thus, the Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation. (#236)

† Comment for the day:

In the book of the prophet Habakkuk, its ancient author expresses with brutal honesty the experience and emotions of his community. He doesn't gloss over destruction and violence but names them and gives voice to the feelings of anger, bitterness and despair experienced by his people. Do we, as religious, clergy or lay leaders in our Church – all called through our baptism to be contemporary prophets in our world – have the courage to follow the lead of Habakkuk? Many of us live in a rather sheltered environment where we do not experience the connection between malnutrition, political instability, violence and severe droughts exacerbated by climate change. We are not grappling with the problem of environmental refugees. Nonetheless, we are a Catholic—that is universal—Church, so it may be appropriate to give expression in a homily to the voices from the peripheries. For too many fellow Catholics sitting in the pews on Sunday, refugees are looked upon with fear and contempt, as lepers were in the time of St. Francis of Assisi. You might want to check on the connection between extreme weather, the violence in different parts of the world, and the refugee problem. It can help the homilist contextualize contemporary cries of despair in the midst of so much injustice and destruction.

At the same time, the first reading also affirms hope as it speaks about the vision that, though delayed, still presses on to fulfillment. Living out of a sense of hope is an intrinsic part of being a Christian. Do we have hope vis-à-vis the daunting environmental crisis? Is it based in something more than the naive optimism that future technological developments will save us? In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis beautifully articulates the vision of restoration, healing and peace as being rooted in the Eucharist.

In 2 Timothy, St. Paul tells us not to give in to a spirit of cowardice. In his 2015 address to the World Meeting of Popular Movements, Pope Francis spoke of cowardice in defending Mother Earth as being a grave sin. A little bit of self-examination may be warranted here. Do we shy away from getting more seriously involved in the issues of environmental justice out of fear of alienating some people? In such cases, voicing an open-ended question can get people to examine their assumptions. Or perhaps you could tell a story – your own or that of someone else in your congregation – in which a new appreciation of the gift God's creation and concern for people on the margins have been "stirred into flame." What set you on fire? A documentary, a sobering statistic about the state of our fragile planet, a personal encounter? Tell the story so that others may be inspired.

Today's Gospel begins with the disciples pleading for Jesus to increase their faith. It concludes, not with some great theological insight, but with a call to humble service. How could one interpret that passage in our own communities today? In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis stresses that green technology could help address our environmental problems, but only if combined with insight and a genuine concern for others, especially those in developing nations.

† Related Prayers of the Faithful:

Option 1: For refugees around the world who flee extreme droughts, floods, hunger, political instability and violence; may the Eucharist provide us with a vision of hope and empower us to care for the poor and the earth, let us pray to the Lord...

Option 2: For our Church that, in the face of the pillage and harm being done to our common home with impunity, we not succumb to the grave sin of cowardice in defending our Mother Earth; let us pray to the Lord....

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