

Integral Faith

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



Homily Helps and Petitions for the 3rd Sunday of Advent, Cycle A (December 11, 2022)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Isaiah 35: Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak, say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you.

Psalms 146: The Lord raises up those who were bowed down. The Lord loves the just.... The fatherless and the widow he sustains, but the way of the wicked he thwarts.

James 5: You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand.

Matthew 11: Jesus said to [the disciples] in reply, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them."

† Comments for the Day:

This week's reading from Isaiah emphasizes how God, who is all just and merciful, will save His people. The Psalm likewise echoes this theme of justice and lifting up the oppressed. The Letter of James then urges patience in awaiting the salvation from the Lord. Then, the passage from Matthew's gospel has Jesus responding to John the Baptist with a list of miracles that should make his identity as the messiah obvious. It concludes with good news for the poor.

Unfortunately, today the poor are suffering the most from environmental problems linked to climate change, and yet they are least culpable for it. One wonders how much hope they can have, especially given the recent United Nations reports indicating how much the richest nations have fallen short of their climate commitments. How can this be interpreted as "good news for the poor"?

Paradoxically, this measurable, evidence-based information may very well be good news for the poor and most vulnerable. It can help those of us who are "better off" reexamine our own lives and lifestyles: Is there something, small or not-so-small, that each of us can *incrementally* do to *collectively* alleviate the impacts of climate change for everyone, born and unborn, now and in the future?

The message of justice, hope, and anticipation offered by this week's readings is congruous with the Advent season. It reminds us that, despite the problems of the world, including social

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.

discord, international conflict, hunger – and even environmental degradation and climate change – the Lord is there to "have our backs" in our own fights for peace, justice, and love.

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

We must continue to be aware that, regarding climate change, there are *differentiated responsibilities*. As the U.S. bishops have said, greater attention must be given to "the needs of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable, in a debate often dominated by more powerful interests. (52)

There is reason to hope that humanity at the dawn of the twenty-first century will be remembered for having generously shouldered its grave responsibilities. (165)

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)

May our struggles and concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope. God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone...his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. *Praise be to him!* (244, 245)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we will come to realize our call as messengers of "good news to the poor" by helping to alleviate their suffering, including that caused by climate change, let us pray to the Lord ...

Option 2: That this Advent can be a time of reflection about our own blessings, and how we might better use those blessings for the benefit of all, let us pray to the Lord ...

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

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

Visit our webpage and sign up to receive these resources delivered to your email inbox each month.