

# 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent, Cycle B (December 17, 2023)

### Homily Helps

#### † Scripture Passages to Note:

**Isaiah 61:** As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord God make justice and praise spring up before all the nations.

**1 Thessalonians 5:** May the God of peace make you perfectly holy.

**John 1:** There is one among you whom you do not recognize.

#### † Comments for the Day:

Son of God, Son of Mary, Prince of Peace, Wonder Counselor: these are some of the titles we use to demonstrate our joy and wonder at the birth of Christ. These days running up to the Christmas celebration provide us the opportunity to reflect on how and where we discover God present in our world – and in ourselves.

Christmas is all about gift: God's self-giving to all creation. Our common home itself is a gift, capable of revealing to us our profound vocation to share with others as God so generously shares with us.

How tragic it is that we have inverted the image and have instead created god in our own image! As Francis alerts us in his new exhortation, *Laudate Deum*, "When human beings claim to take God's place, they become their own worst enemies." (73) We succumb to the temptation of believing that the world that surrounds us is merely an object for our exploitation, fueled by unbridled consumption and unlimited ambition.

We have the opportunity during this season of Advent to once again recognize our call to grow in the image and likeness of our bountiful Creator; to foster a culture and spirituality genuinely capable of setting limits, and teaching clear-minded self-restraint. We are invited to recognize that we are a part of nature, called to foster a healthy interaction between humanity and the environment that we all share, reshaping it without destroying or endangering it.

How much easier it is for us to spend time setting up an attractive but inanimate manger scene, than to focus our attention on God's presence among us in those who live on the margin, left out of what society can offer? Our society lulls us into thinking that we can and need to "earn" God's love, while the Advent season flies in the face of this way of reasoning. This time allows God to present himself as a helpless infant, placed in a trough for want of a bed. God is trying to tell us how much he needs us, our cooperation, and our dedication to build a better world for all.

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.

Pope Francis reminds us of mistaken notions around this concept of “meritocracy.” A healthy approach to the value of hard work, the development of our natural abilities, and a praiseworthy spirit of initiative are certainly admirable – but only when tempered by a genuine search for equity and equal opportunities. Meritocracy, advises Francis, can easily become a screen that further consolidates the privileges of a few with great power, at the expense of the majority who remain left out, sidelined, excluded.

We can easily be tempted to relegate God to certain places or times in our lives, rather than recognizing God's presence in us and through us, in our relationships with others, and in nature. Advent is an invitation to grow more aware of the damage we have done to our common home, and decisively take the next step on the path of healing. This involves actively promoting the common good, and caring for our common home.

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

If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn "realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith". (64)

Human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself. According to the Bible, these three vital relationships have been broken... The harmony between the Creator, humanity and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God. (66)

Yet God, who wishes to work with us and who counts on our cooperation, can also bring good out of the evil we have done. (80)

When nature is viewed solely as a source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society. This vision of "might is right" has engendered immense inequality, injustice and acts of violence against the majority of humanity, since resources end up in the hands of the first comer or the most powerful: the winner takes all. Completely at odds with this model are the ideals of harmony, justice, fraternity and peace as proposed by Jesus. (82)

## Related Prayers of the Faithful

**Option 1:** That, as the celebration of Jesus' birth fast approaches, may we strive to make peace a reality in our lives by forgiving and being agents of reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord ...

**Option 2:** That we might continue to grow in our commitment to discover God in ourselves, in one another, and in creation, 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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