

# Integral Faith

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



Catholic Climate Covenant<sup>™</sup>  
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

## Homily Helps and Petitions for the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A (February 19, 2023)

### Homily Helps

#### † Scripture Passages to Note:

**Leviticus 19:** Be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy... Though you may have to reprove your fellow citizen, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

**1 Corinthians 3:** Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

**Matthew 5:** Jesus said to his disciples: "You have heard that it was said, *An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.* But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one as well."

#### † Comments for the Day:

Leviticus states: "Be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy." The scripture then underscores that holiness has to do with the quality of our relationships with those around us. To be holy, therefore, is to respond to the needs of others through love.

Over the last two centuries, industrialization and exploitation of natural resources have produced great wealth and material progress. Yet they have also contributed to large-scale environmental destruction and to a highly inequitable distribution of the world's goods. The radical changes in the ecology of our planet, especially the atmosphere and oceans, now threaten the very survival of future generations. This new reality challenges us spiritually and morally. God calls us to extend compassion to the most vulnerable, to children not yet born, and to our fellow creatures on God's earth. How will we respond to this contemporary call to holiness?

Today's readings present a wonderful opportunity to share examples of people who act with love, mercy, and compassion towards their neighbors. Volunteering in a food pantry, working to end conflict and violence in our communities, welcoming refugees and the homeless, protecting the unborn and the poor, and working to protect the environment at home and at large – these are some of the ways to show love of neighbor and respond to our call to holiness.

In his First Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul reminds us that every Christian is the temple of God. That is a radical claim, especially if we consider that in our society and its institutions, market forces and the nearly untouchable right to accumulate profit often trump human dignity. We can become irate when we witness the avarice that seems to mark our society these days. However, we do well to bear in mind that the call to holiness may also mean charitably engaging those who harm others or God's creation, our common home.

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.

In the gospel, Jesus calls us to turn the other cheek and love our enemies. One might well ask: "Are we to passively acquiesce to evil?" In first-century Mediterranean culture, dominant members of the upper class humiliated the underclass by hitting them with the back of the right hand. Turning the other cheek was in fact a creative way to stand up for one's human dignity, rather than cringe in shame. Today, what are some creative ways we as individuals and as a church can respond to attacks upon our communities, our dignity, and the neighborhoods in which we live?

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis boldly stands up for the poor and for the integrity of our common home, but he does it with love and compassion, summoning all to praise God. How can we learn from this example as we engage in our own struggles? How can we promote an integrally higher quality of life for all of God's creatures?

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

Some countries with scarce resources will require assistance in adapting to the effects [of climate change] already being produced, which affect their economies. In this context, there is a need for common and differentiated responsibilities. As the bishops of Bolivia have stated, "the countries which have benefited from a high degree of industrialization, at the cost of enormous emissions of greenhouse gases, have a greater responsibility for providing a solution to the problems they have caused." (170)

Unless citizens control political power – national, regional and municipal – it will not be possible to control damage to the environment. (179)

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.... talk of sustainable growth usually becomes a way of distracting attention and offering excuses. It absorbs the language and values of ecology into the categories of finance and technocracy, and the social and environmental responsibility of businesses often gets reduced to a series of marketing and image-enhancing measures. (194)

## Related Prayers of the Faithful

**Option 1:** For the church, that we may grow in holiness by showing mercy and care to our global neighbors, and by safeguarding our common home, let us pray to the Lord....

**Option 2:** For the children and youth of our parish, that with our help they may learn creative alternatives to violence and respect for God's 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)