

**Homily Helps and Petitions for the
Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle C (February 20, 2022)**

Homily Helps

† **Scripture Passages to Note:**

1 Samuel 26:23: Today, though the Lord delivered you into my grasp, I would not harm the Lord's anointed.

Psalms 103:12: As far as the east is from the west, so far has he put our transgressions from us.

1 Corinthians 15:46: But the spiritual was not the first; rather the natural, then the spiritual.

Luke 6:27, 38: To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.... For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.

† **Comments for the Day:**

In today's gospel, Jesus continues to tell hard truths to his disciples. His words bring to mind great teachers of nonviolence like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, who embodied the teachings of Jesus – and paid the ultimate price for it.

Today, these teachings are bearing fruit in areas like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and restorative justice programs in prisons and schools that have high rates of violence. These programs bring offenders and victims together in circles that include other community members. The victim tells the offender the effects the violence has had in her or his own life. Then the victim, offender, and community discuss how things went wrong and how they can be made right. When violence is addressed in this way, incidents of retribution and vengeance between individuals drop markedly and community is strengthened.

Jesus is teaching *agape*, the highest and deepest form of love. *Agape* is a wholehearted, unconditional desire for the wellbeing of another, even those we dislike intensely. It is love that is intentional, not based on feelings. *Agape* requires forgiveness that is not condescending or an ego-boost to the one who forgives. *Agape* is possible when we can look into the heart of someone who has hurt us and see him or her as having human dignity. This is not to deny the hurt they have caused. It is to gain freedom from grudges and resentments and the need to get even. It is placing our trust in God who, "In the act of forgiveness, gives us back our dignity and self-worth." (Richard Rohr)

All of this is hard work; it is not for cowards: Neither David nor Jesus was weak or cowardly. Jesus never backed down from a confrontation with hypocrisy or untruth. Yet he did not resist those who arrested and crucified him, and he stopped Peter from violently defending him. Likewise, we may sometimes feel victimized or harmed by those who exploit and damage the environment for economic gain, or simply through negligence. Although we cannot condone

such actions, we must move beyond feeling victimized and desiring retribution. Rather, we can work toward accountability and justice, and seek solutions to help heal creation – and ourselves.

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

Ecological culture cannot be reduced to a series of urgent and partial responses to the immediate problems of pollution, environmental decay and the depletion of natural resources. There needs to be a distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, policies, an educational program, a lifestyle and a spirituality which together generate resistance to the assault of the technocratic paradigm... (#111)

Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes a capacity for living together and communion. Jesus reminded us that we have God as our common Father and that this makes us brothers and sisters. Fraternal love can only be gratuitous; it can never be a means of repaying others for what they have done or will do for us. That is why it is possible to love our enemies. This same gratuitousness inspires us to love and accept the wind, the sun and the clouds, even though we can't control them. In this sense, we can speak of a "universal fraternity". (#228)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we are given the grace to avoid seeking revenge toward those who have hurt us or God's creation, and instead work toward justice and healing, we pray to the Lord.

Option 2: That we come to recognize our responsibility to care for our common home, without being distracted by the allures of wealth or material things, we pray to the Lord.

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

Webpage: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/resources?tid=14>

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