

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 (15 December 2019)

Homily Helps

† Comment for the day:

Today Isaiah offers us a message of consolation. He foresees that God will bring back the Jews who had been taken captive taken by Assyria. He portrays their restoration by God as a new Exodus. The land itself will be restored. And he proclaims that the most devastated and wretched of the exiles, not the powerful, will be the first to share in the blessings of the restored land. The Psalm, written for a day of feasting, offers praise for the mighty works of mercy that come from God's hand.

In his letter to the Christian community, James urges steadfastness in waiting for God's appearance at the end of time. He uses the image of the early and late rains—so vital to farmers in Palestine and southern Syria—to assure them God will bring life abundant to them. In counseling patience he also exhorts his community to be strong: Patience is not passivity.

Jesus's words in Matthew reinforce the theme of God's preferential love for the poor. They also signal that Jesus is not the judgmental, angry warrior of Messianic expectation, but a Messiah of healing and compassion. Jesus praises John as someone greater than all of the great prophets. He then proclaims that through faith the least of his followers can be greater prophets yet.

† Scripture passages to note:

Isaiah 35: The desert and the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom...
They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God...
Say to those whose hearts are frightened: "Be strong, fear not!
Those whom the Lord has ransomed will return...sorrow and mourning will flee.

Psalm 146: The Lord keeps faith forever, secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry.
The Lord sets captives free.

James 5: Take as an example of hardship and patience, brothers and sisters, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 11: 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.

Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: *Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you.*

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.

Homily Helps (cont.)

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to note:

The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we tend to causes related to human degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet... (48)

In some countries there are positive examples of environmental improvement...These achievements do not solve global problems, but they do show that men and women are still capable of intervening positively. (#58)

A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society. (#91)

In talking with his disciples, Jesus would invite them to recognize the paternal relationship that God has with all his creatures. With moving tenderness he would remind them that each one of them is important in God's eyes. (#96)

It must be said that some prayerful and committed Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and this become inconsistent. (#217)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we might grow in the patience needed to work toward more ecologically responsible lives, let us pray to the Lord....

Option 2: That we have the grace to emulate the compassion and care of Jesus for refugees and the poor, let us pray to the Lord....

Further Resources

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