

# Integral Faith

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



## Homily Helps and Petitions for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent, Cycle A (22 December 2016)

### Homily Helps

#### † Comment for the day:

Isaiah had a vision of a people living in peace and harmony, guided by God's law and living life "with hands that are sinless" (taking no bribes) and "a heart (that) is clean" (not worshiping idols). Ahab, on the other hand, refused to ask for a sign from God. He had already made up his mind to put his trust in Assyria's military might, instead of God's promise to protect Judah from its enemies. The results were disastrous. How often do we rely on the empty promises of technology, corporations, or the media to guide our choices in life? How often do we worship the idols of fashion, celebrity, and consumerism at the expense of "the earth and its fullness; the world and all who dwell in it"? Matthew sees the birth of Jesus as the fulfillment of centuries of hope for security from Israel's enemies. But instead of a warrior king, Jesus is the Prince of Peace. The ways of God are not the ways of the world.

Joseph took Mary into his home. As a devoted father, he protected the Christ Child from the injustice and hatred of those in power. Both Joseph and Mary are exemplars of fidelity to the trust they received from God. As Pope Francis reminds us, we ourselves are entrusted with the care of our neighbors—especially those who are most vulnerable—and of creation, itself, as well. He asks us to see Christ in those who are marginalized or persecuted. Many have been displaced by drought, famine, and climate change.

Our Christian vocation calls for us to trust God's promises and work for their fulfillment.

#### † Scripture passages to note:

**Isaiah 7:** Ask for a sign from the Lord, your God; let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky!... The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.

**Psalms 24:** The Lord's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it. For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

**Romans 1:** [C]alled to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised previously through his prophets in the holy Scriptures....Through [Christ] we have received the grace of apostleship, to bring about the obedience of faith.

**Matthew 1:** [T]he angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream... [H]e will save his people from their sins...

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his 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.

## Homily Helps (cont.)

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

Any technical solution which science claims to offer will be powerless to solve the serious problems of our world if humanity loses its compass, if we lose sight of the great motivations which make it possible for us to live in harmony, to make sacrifices and to treat each other well. (#200)

"[T]he most extraordinary scientific advances, the most amazing technical abilities, the most astonishing economic growth, unless they are accompanied by authentic moral social and moral progress will definitively turn against man." (Pope Paul VI) (#4)

[N]ature as a whole not only manifests God but is also a locus of his presence. The Spirit of life dwells in every living creature and calls us to enter into relationship with him. Discovering this presence leads us to cultivate the "ecological virtues." (#88)

Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience (#217)

Mary, the mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world. Hence we can ask her to enable us to look at this world with eyes of wisdom. (#241)

At her side in the Holy Family of Nazareth, stands the figure of St. Joseph. Through his work and generous presence, he cared for and defended Mary and Jesus, delivering them from the violence of the unjust by bringing them to Egypt. The Gospel presents Joseph as a just man, hard-working and strong. But he also shows great tenderness, which is not a mark of the weak, but of those who are genuinely strong, fully aware of reality and ready to love and serve in humility. That is why he was proclaimed custodian of the universal Church. He too can inspire us to work with generosity and tenderness in protecting world which God has entrusted to us. (#242)

## Related Prayers of the Faithful

**Option 1:** That we attend more to the voices of God, the earth and the poor than to the forces of consumerism, let us pray to the Lord....

**Option 2:** That our vocation to protect God's handiwork become more central to our spiritual lives, 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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