

Integral Faith

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



Homily Helps and Petitions for the Nativity of the Lord, Cycle B (December 25, 2023)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Isaiah 52: All the ends of the earth will behold the salvation of our God.

Hebrews 1: (God) has spoken to us through the Son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe, who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word.

John 1: All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race.

† Comments for the Day:

2023 is the year that marks the eighth centenary of that first representation of the Nativity scene which Saint Francis set up in Greccio, a little village close to the Italian city of Rieti.

Recently, one nativity scene replaced the traditional statues ordinarily displayed in many parish settings. Some parishioners grew frustrated at the “loss” of yet another of the figures from their creche, an all-too-familiar occurrence. They decided to display the manger scene with stick figures on leftover pieces of cardboard, typically used as an inexpensive, disposable doormat after a mushy snowfall. If someone decided to take these cheap alternative figures, they could be easily replaced. Not surprisingly, no one took any of the figures. But more than one parishioner took offense: “How could you think of replacing our beautiful creche with these insignificant fragments of discarded leftovers?”

On the other hand, as we contemplate those substitute figures, we can allow ourselves to be truly amazed at the extent of God’s love for us: that he would be willing to not only become one of us, but to also be laid to rest in a manger from which animals regularly ate. Certainly, the respectable people of Bethlehem would consider anyone that desperate to be pitiable, and really a shame.

This might remind us of what Dorothy Day wrote one Christmas several decades ago: “It is no use saying that we are born two thousand years too late to give room to Christ. Christ is always with us, always asking for room in our hearts.” This Christmas season let us open our eyes and our heart to discover Christ present in our midst, in those considered worthless, who have been diminished, exploited and discarded – the outcasts of society who are most impacted by our carelessness and exploitation of God's wonderful creation.

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.

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:

In talking with his disciples, Jesus would invite them to recognize the paternal relationship 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)

Jesus lived in full harmony with creation, and others were amazed: "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" (*Mt* 8:27). His appearance was not that of an ascetic set apart from the world, nor of an enemy to the pleasant things of life.... It is striking that most of his life was dedicated to this task in a simple life which awakened no admiration at all. (98)

From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole, without thereby impinging on its autonomy. (99)

The New Testament does not only tell us of the earthly Jesus and his tangible and loving relationship with the world. It also shows him risen and glorious, present throughout creation by his universal Lordship. (100)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That the peace that Christ offers will be a reality for all peoples. let us pray to the Lord ...

Option 2: That we may be filled with a spirit of gratitude for the gift of God-With-Us, and be granted courage to share that gift with those around us, let us pray to the Lord ...

Further Resources

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