

Integral Faith

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



Catholic Climate Covenant™
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

Homily Helps and Petitions for the The Epiphany of the Lord, Cycle A (January 8, 2023)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Isaiah 60: See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the Lord shines, and over you appears his glory. Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance.

Psalms 72: O God, with your judgment endow the king, and with your justice, the king's son; He shall govern your people with justice and your afflicted ones with judgment.

Ephesians 3: You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace.... The Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 2: [The Magi] were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage.... And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

† Comments for the Day:

The feast of the Epiphany celebrates the revelation of Christ to all the nations captured in the story of the visitation of the Magi. In Christ we see fulfilled the vision of the prophets, that the light of Israel would also be a light for all peoples: "Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance."

In the same story, King Herod saw Jesus as his rival. Thus our readings paint a contrast between earthly princes who follow the ways of the world, and the Divine King who ushers in the reign of justice. After beholding Jesus, the Magi were advised to not return to their countries by way of Herod, but by another way. The Magi were smart: they sought another way.

Today, the way of Herod is still the way of the world – the way of power and domination that leads to injustices like oppression of the poor and despoiling of the environment. Here in the U.S., corporate domination of agriculture makes it difficult for farmers to make a living, and urban workers get caught between economic forces that benefit the rich and powerful. In other countries, wealthy elites, large plantations, and corporate interests drive peasants off their land. Poor families lose the basis of their livelihood, and the land itself is exploited unsustainably for short-term profit. The destruction of the Amazon for agriculture displaces indigenous people, so we in the developed world will have more meat, coffee, and sugar. Where else are we doing something similar?

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.

Isaiah spoke of the darkness that covered the Earth in his day. It remains in ours. Like the Magi, we need to keep looking for the light of justice that shines bright, bringing us to Christ and enabling us to bring light to others. This feast of the Epiphany challenges us to see Christ as a beacon in our world today. And it calls us to be a beacon for others: Our world needs us to be today's Magi and their stars. At the end of every mass we are charged to "Go and glorify the Lord by your life!" – by your *light!*

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:

"Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest." For example, the depletion of fishing reserves especially hurts small fishing communities without the means to replace those resources; water pollution particularly affects the poor who cannot buy bottled water; and rises in the sea level mainly affect impoverished coastal populations who have nowhere else to go. (48)

We have to realize that a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.* (49)

"He himself made both small and great" (*Wis 6:7*), and "he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good" (*Mt 5:45*). This has practical consequences, such as those pointed out by the bishops of Paraguay: "Every *campesino* has a natural right to possess a reasonable allotment of land where he can establish his home, work for subsistence of his family and a secure life." (94)

The natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone. . . . That is why the New Zealand bishops asked what the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" means when "twenty percent of the world's population consumes resources at a rate that robs the poor nations and future generations of what they need to survive." (95)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That Christ's light of justice be a beacon that guides us beyond consumerism to promote the good of all while being worthy stewards of the earth, let us pray to the Lord...

Option 2: That the revelation of Christ to the nations may guide all peoples on the path of peace and justice to a healthy planet, our "common home," let us pray to the Lord...

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

Webpage: www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help

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