

Integral Faith

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



Homily Helps and Petitions for the The Epiphany of the Lord, Cycle A (5 January 2020)

Homily Helps

† Comment for the day:

On this feast of the Epiphany we celebrate the revelation of Christ to all the nations. That revelation is 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."

At the same time, Herod saw Jesus as his rival. Thus our readings paint a contrast between earthly princes who follow the ways of the world and the innocent Christ child who will usher in the reign of justice. After beholding Jesus, the Magi were advised not return to their countries by way of Herod but to go by another way. Here we might think of the way of Herod as the way of the world, the way of power and domination. The Magi were to seek another way.

In our own day, when we look around at the nations of the world, we see that the way of power and domination still leads to the oppression of the poor and the despoiling of the land. Here in the U.S. corporate domination of agriculture makes it difficult for farmers to make a living, while urban workers are caught between economic forces that benefit the rich and powerful. In other countries, wealthy elites, large plantations, and corporate interests such as mining firms move peasants off their land. Poor families lose the basis of their livelihood, and the land itself is exploited unsustainably for short-term profit.

In his day, Isaiah spoke of the darkness that covered the Earth. In our own day, we, too, are in need of the light of justice that Christ brings. The promise of this feast of the Epiphany shines as a beacon for us today.

† 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.

Matthew 2: They 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.

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:

"We note that often the businesses which operate this way are multinationals... Generally, after ceasing their activity and withdrawing, they leave behind great human and environmental liabilities such as unemployment, abandoned towns, the depletion of natural reserves, deforestation, the impoverishment of agriculture and local stock breeding, open pits, riven hills, polluted rivers and a handful of social works which are no longer sustainable." [Bishops of Argentina] (#51)

"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)

Today, however, 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)

The rich and the poor have equal dignity, for "the Lord is the maker of them all" (Prov 22:2).

"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)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That the revelation of Christ to the nations may guide all peoples on the path of peace and justice, let us pray to the Lord...

Option 2: That the Christ's light of justice be a beacon that guides us beyond consumerism to promote the good of all and to safeguard the integrity of the Earth, let us pray to the Lord...

Further Resources

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