

Integral Faith

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



Homily Resources and Petitions for the Feast of Saint Francis, October 4, 2018

Homily Helps

† Scripture passages to note:

Job 19:25

But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust.

Psalm 27:13

I believe I shall see the LORD's goodness in the land of the living.

Luke 10:3, 9

Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves... Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand for you.'

† Comment for the day:

Today is the Feast of St. Francis, the great patron saint of the environment. In his landmark encyclical on caring for God's creation, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis spoke about St. Francis this way: "Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically." Saint Francis' love for God's creation and for God's people inspired Pope Francis' vision of integral ecology – a way of seeing all of life as interconnected, and calling for all of us to live in a way that cares both for the environment and for the most vulnerable of our sisters and brothers.

It is easy to sentimentalize St. Francis, as we bring to mind artistic representations of him gently holding a bird in his hands and speaking words of peace. But no one achieves sainthood without experiencing hardship and opposition, and Francis was no exception. Living our call to care for God's creation and for the poor will sometimes put us in conflict with powerful forces in the world, and we may experience discouragement and outright rejection. Today's readings offer examples of persistence and faith in the face of such opposition.

In the first reading, Job is at his wits' end. He is unable to make sense of the afflictions he has endured, and even believes that his suffering has been at the hand of God. Nonetheless, even in the depths of his despair, he maintains faith that God's justice will prevail in the end: "I know that my Vindicator lives." The psalmist echoes a similar faith. We don't know the circumstances of the psalmist's anguish, only

that even as the psalmist cries out to God for pity, he still affirms a faith in God's justice: "I believe I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living." And in today's Gospel, when Jesus commissions the disciples to spread his word, he warns them that he is sending them "like lambs among the wolves." But the message he sends them out to proclaim is a message of great joy and hope: "The Kingdom of God is at hand."

Yes, the task to care for God's creation can be a daunting one, but we must not lose hope. May we follow the path of Saint Francis, finding joy and peace in caring for all of God's creation.

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

Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically.... He shows us just how inseparable is the bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace. (#10)

His response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection. ... The poverty and austerity of Saint Francis were no mere veneer of asceticism, but something much more radical: a refusal to turn reality into an object simply to be used and controlled. (#11)

Saint Francis...invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness. ... Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise. (#12)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: May the example of Saint Francis lead us to greater appreciation and gratitude for the magnificent gifts of God's creation, we pray to the Lord.....

Option 2: May the example of Saint Francis lead us to adopt lives of greater simplicity and generosity in caring for all of God's people and all of God's creation, we pray to the Lord.....

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