

# Integral Faith

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



## Homily Helps, Petitions, and Bulletin Notices for the 29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A (22 October 2017)

### Homily Helps

#### † Comment for the day:

The scripture readings of this Sunday offer an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between our faith and our politics, a sensitive topic in the U.S. today. Our reading from Isaiah is an oracle from God praising Cyrus the ruler of Persia. When Cyrus conquered Babylon in 538 B.C.E. he released the peoples who had been held captive there, including the Jews. God tells Cyrus that, despite his ignorance of the God of Israel, he had been chosen as an instrument of Israel's liberation. A clay cylinder in cuneiform writing describing Cyrus' deeds was discovered in the ruins of Babylon in 1879. In 1971 the U.N. named it as the first written declaration of human rights in history. Our liberating God often works in ways and in persons that may be outside our worldview.

Likewise, at first the gentiles of Thessalonica were outside of Paul's worldview, since he first came there to preach to the Jews. It was, however, the city's gentiles who responded to his preaching. After traveling on, Paul sent Timothy to check on this new community, and Timothy came back with a good report. Paul then wrote to them from Athens to express his gratitude to God because they were living in faith and love. He tells them that they have been chosen to live in the grace and peace of Christ. Accordingly, they are to make God's promises living realities in the world. Like Cyrus, these gentiles have been chosen as God's instruments in the world. And in another first, this letter was not only Paul's first recorded writing, it is the very first work of Christian literature in the New Testament.

Matthew relates another attempt by the authorities to put Jesus in a bind. If he says to pay the tax, he will be siding with the hated Roman conquerors; if he says not to, he will be arrested for inciting rebellion against Rome. Jesus's reply has often been understood as a command to keep religion and politics entirely separate. Understanding it as a command not to impose our beliefs on others could lead us to the respect human rights of others to their beliefs. But it does not prohibit activism. David Lose has written, "Jesus invites/demands that we think regularly and relentlessly about how all our decisions...what we buy, who we vote for, and how we spend our time should be shaped by the confession that, indeed, the whole world is God's and everything in it, including us." (David Lose, *God, Caesar and the Power of a Good Question*. [www.workingpreacher.org](http://www.workingpreacher.org). Oct. 9, 2011)

Pope Francis is eloquent in urging us to reject consumerism, to be mindful of the impact of our choices on the environment, and to advocate for earth-friendly policies on the part of governments. He tirelessly proclaims that climate change is a moral issue and that God did not create the earth to be devastated and exploited by humans for their own selfish purposes. Let us be the first generation in history to claim our obligation to care for the earth as our common 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.)

### † Scripture passages to note:

**Isaiah 45:** I have called you by your name, giving you a title though you knew me not.

**Psalms 96:** Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord all you lands.

**1 Thessalonians:** ...knowing brothers and sisters, loved by God, how you were chosen. For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and the Holy Spirit and with much conviction.

**Matthew 22:** At that he said to them, "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."

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

Yet access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival, and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity. (#30)

A healthy politics is sorely needed, capable of reforming and coordinating institutions, promoting best practices and overcoming undue pressure and bureaucratic inertia. It should be added, though, that even the best mechanisms can break down when there are no worthy goals and values, or a genuine and profound humanism to serve as the basis of a noble and generous society. (#181)

What is needed is a politics which is far-sighted and capable of a new, integral and interdisciplinary approach to handling the different aspects of the crisis....A strategy for real change calls for rethinking processes in their entirety, for it is not enough to include a few superficial ecological considerations while failing to question the logic which underlies present-day culture. A healthy politics needs to be able to take up this challenge. (#197)

## Related Prayers of the Faithful

**Option 1:** That in complex circumstances, we may find our voice and advocate for our planet, so that it can be a source of life and health for all creatures, let us pray to the Lord....

**Option 2:** That the Spirit guide us to be mindful of the earth and its people in the everyday decisions we make, let us pray to the Lord....

## Further Resources

Feedback: [IntegralFaithForLife@gmail.com](mailto:IntegralFaithForLife@gmail.com)

Webpage: [www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help)

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