

Integral Faith

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



Homily Helps, Petitions, and Bulletin Notices for the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A (29 October 2017)

Homily Helps

† Comment for the day:

Today's scriptures center on the true nature of love. We tend to think of love as a tender emotion, but love in biblical terms is not sentimental. It is about what we do for others. The passage from Exodus is a section of the law that Moses received from God on Sinai. Mosaic law is of another time and place, but much of it is still relevant today. God exhorts the Israelites to treat aliens and the poor, the most vulnerable members of his society, with compassion. The Israelites are to act with compassion because their God is compassionate. They are to go beyond their likes, dislikes, and preferences in order to reach out to the defenseless members of their society; they are to act as God does.

St. Paul commends the Christians at Thessalonica because of the way they have joyfully embraced and lived out their faith, even in difficult circumstances. Like the Israelites, they have gone beyond their private interests to act as Christ in the world. They preach the Good News constantly by through their actions, so that Paul does not have to preach to them with words. They are living examples of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew gives us his account of the religious authorities' last attempt to trick Jesus into condemning himself so they can arrest him. Asking him which of the 613 commandments in the Law of Moses is the greatest is an invitation to start a controversy. And Jesus does just that. He quotes two laws, one from Deuteronomy and one from Leviticus and combines them into one. Then he does something unheard of; he claims that the entire law and teaching of the prophets are summed up in this one law. To obey this law we must have the compassion of God in our hearts, then act toward other with that compassion. Sometimes we might not always *feel* that compassion, but when we go beyond ourselves to act generously and lovingly in God's name, we make it real. Of course, to do this is always involves risk. Indeed, the day after this encounter the authorities begin to plot Jesus's death.

Throughout *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis advocates care for the most vulnerable peoples of the world. They will be the ones most affected by climate change. Many have already become aliens in other lands because climate change has forced them to migrate. So the Pope urges us to act on local, national and global levels, risking opposition and controversy. Citizens of other countries sometimes risk imprisonment and even death when they oppose alliances between corrupt governments and large corporations seeking to profit from projects that exploit natural resources and disregard the local population.

This Sunday is also Reformation Sunday, and a special one at that: It is the five-hundredth anniversary of the beginnings of the Reformation. Though the call to reform the Church in the end led to division, we do well to follow the lead of Pope Francis in seeking healing and reconciliation. This is also an apt moment to heed his call for all faiths to unite to protect and care for 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:

Exodus 22: You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens in the land of Egypt. You shall not wrong any widow or orphan. If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry.

1 Thessalonians 1: [I]n every place your faith in God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

Matthew 22: The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to note:

In some places cooperatives are being developed to exploit renewable sources of energy which ensure local self-sufficiency and even the sale of surplus energy. This simple example shows that, while the existing world order proves powerless to assume its responsibilities, local individuals and groups can make a real difference. They are able to instill a greater sense of responsibility, a strong sense of community, a readiness to protect others, a spirit of creativity and a deep love of the land. (#179)

The majority of people living on our planet profess to be believers. This should spur religions to dialogue among themselves for the sake of protecting nature, defending the poor, and building networks of respect and fraternity. (#201)

We are always capable of going out of ourselves towards the other. Unless we do this, other creatures will not be recognized for their true worth; we are unconcerned about caring for things for the sake of others; we fail to set limits on ourselves to avoid the suffering of others and the deterioration of our surroundings. Disinterested concern for others and the rejection of every form of self-centeredness and self-absorption, are essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment. These attitudes also attune us to the moral imperative of assessing the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us. If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society. (#208)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That the Spirit help us grow in compassion for others, and that this compassion may lead to care for the most vulnerable among us and for the earth we all depend on, let us pray to the Lord....

Option 2: That the Spirit guide our choices so that they place a priority on care for the earth, our common home, even if others misunderstand or oppose us, let us pray to the Lord....

Further Resources

Feedback: IntegralFaithForLife@gmail.com

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

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