

Integral Faith

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



Homily Helps, Petitions, and Bulletin Notices for the 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A (5 November 2017)

Homily Helps

† Comment for the day:

The ancient Jewish prophets clearly understood that an essential part of being the people chosen by God involved a collective commitment to restorative justice and to seeking harmony within all creatures. When that clear prophetic vision became opaque or was lost altogether, God would lash out at the priests of Israel. In the readings for this Sunday, God speaks through the prophet Malachi to reprimand the priests of Israel for turning aside from "the Way." The Way is a frequent scriptural image for a way of life that attends to the plight of the poor and marginalized. However, the priests had stopped being stewards of God's covenant and champions of social justice. Malachi proclaimed that by showing partiality for the rich and powerful of society, the religious leaders of ancient Israel were bringing woes and curses upon themselves and their entire people.

It is also incumbent upon the contemporary religious and lay leaders to pay attention to God speaking to us through the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth. Running a parish and its many ministries, celebrating the Sacraments, passing on the faith, and keeping the lights on are all important tasks. At the same time, the Church that is faithful must not remain on the sidelines in the struggle for human dignity and justice. In our day, we witness enormous social and environmental threats to the human family and to the earth itself. And so the ancient words of Malachi still challenge the Church to keep its prophetic edge; the Church must not remain silent in the face of those who exploit the poor and wreak havoc on our fragile planet.

In our second reading, St. Paul addresses the young community of believers. He conveys his fond affection for them, suffers with them, and praises their goodness. At the same time, he underscores his suspicion toward those who utter noble words and not backed by actions of love and mercy. Like St. Paul, Pope Francis demonstrates a great affection and concern for young Christians (see the quotes below). He praises them for their idealism, generous spirit, and ecological sensitivity. The young people of today will inherit the world, a world that is undergoing radical, perilous changes; human actions are having an impact on our oceans, air and soil.

Do we who are adults and leaders in our local faith communities have the courage to imitate Saint Paul and Pope Francis by standing in solidarity with the young people today? Many of them are overwhelmed by the magnitude of the social and ecological problems then press in on every side; they are fearful about the world they are inheriting from us. When they look at the individual and collective choices we make - e.g. when we shop or when we cast our votes - will young people see in our actions a love and concerns for them and for their future? More broadly,

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.)

† Comment for the day (cont.):

how well do our faith communities accompany young people, give God thanks for their gifts and talents, nurture their sense of justice and their ecological sensibilities, or help them develop the community organizing skills necessary for living up to the challenges they are facing?

In the Gospel, Jesus cautions us against the promoters of shallow religiosity. They talk the talk but they are unwilling to walk the walk. They lack a real commitment to compassion and justice. They try to cover up the gaping spiritual and moral hole in their lives with external, elaborate expression of piety. The antidote that Jesus offers to those who are tempted to go that route is to act in solidarity with the poor and excluded, and thereby to become a servant of all. Pope Francis echoes that call in the encyclical *Laudato Si'*. It is a contemporary interpretation of the way God calls us to live our lives as disciples of Jesus, serving those considered disposable in our society, the future generations, even the tiniest marine organisms (#40 *Laudato Si'*) that our human lives so depend on.

† Scripture passages to note:

Malachi 1 & 2: "O priests, this commandment is for you: If you do not listen...I will send a curse upon you and of your blessing I will make a curse. You have turned aside from the way... and show partiality in your decisions.

"Have we not all the one father? Has not the one God created us? Why then do we break faith with one another, violating the covenant of our fathers?"

1 Thessalonians 2: We were gentle among you, as a nursing mother cares for her children. We too give thanks to God unceasingly.

Matthew 23: They preach but they do not practice... The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to note:

An awareness of the gravity of today's cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into new habits... In those countries which should be making the greatest changes in consumer habits, young people have a new ecological sensitivity and a generous spirit, and some of them are making admirable efforts to protect the environment. (#209)

[A]voiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity. (#211)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: For the parents and catechists in our parish that through their words and personal example of a sustainable lifestyle they may help nurture the ecological virtues in our children and a culture of life, let us pray to the Lord....

Option 2: For our Church, that we may always practice what we preach and serve as credible witnesses to God's special love for the poor and the abandoned, let us pray to the Lord....

Further Resources

Feedback: IntegralFaithForLife@gmail.com

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

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