

Integral Faith

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



Homily Helps, Petitions, and Bulletin Notices for the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A (12 November 2017)

Homily Helps

† Comment for the day:

Today's first reading inspires us to pursue wisdom. Among the noblest of human quests, it is here described in the language of desire. In this passage, wisdom is personified as a woman. She woos with her subtle beauty. To gain her favor, however, requires earnest effort and total commitment. How is this reading relevant to our lives? We can of our spiritual journey as a path of beauty. Among the twists and turns of life, we occasionally glimpse true holiness, and it beckons us to our authentic fulfillment. But do we make the commitment to pursue what alone will truly fulfill us?

This passage from the Book of Wisdom can help the contemporary Christians liberate their deepest desires, propelling them on their quest for meaning and beauty. It offers rich alternative to the hyper-consumerist lifestyle promoted by our society. By contrast, our consumerist culture generates a gnawing sense of emptiness and wreaks havoc upon the earth's life-support system.

Pope Francis argues that we urgently need a spiritual revolution that would awaken in us a new reverence for life. Such a spiritual revolution would free us of our obsession with consumption and create space for a more thoughtful way of living. It would restore the integrity of human life and the integrity of our ecosystems. The insight of our reading is that sometimes we need more than just moralism to come alive again. We need the spark of divine beauty and deep-felt desire.

Our passage from Paul's letter to Thessalonians has often been egregiously misinterpreted. Contrary to the opinion of many fundamentalist Christians, the passage doesn't describe believers being whisked away from the Earth in "the Rapture." The image is not about escaping the earth before it is burned and destroyed. Rather, it describes faithful Christians greeting the Lord and escorting him as his entourage on a glorious parade to earth as he returns to establish shalom. This passage is a direct critique of the escapist type of spiritualities – and liturgies – that keep people in a spiritual slumber, deterred from active participation in Christ's mission of transforming the world through mercy, charity, and justice.

The Gospel parable exhorts us to respond to our trials and tribulation with hope and the good works. The early Christians waited for the Second Coming of Christ. And some of them became lax and disengaged from the works of mercy, charity and justice. In this parable, they were being compared to the foolish five virgins who did not bring sufficient oil. As a result, they were excluded from the wedding banquet.

Who are we in this story? Are we drowsy and asleep? Lulled to sleep by hyper-consumerism or escapist forms of spirituality, some Christians might be likened to the five virgins who ran out of oil. Other Christians have resisted the spiritual slumber and, as a result, they have awakened to a new reverence for life. They make decision about what they buy based on their sense of social responsibility. They get involved in their community. They advocate for economic, racial and climate justice. The wonderful irony is that it is often in making and living difficult choices that we begin to experience the joy of Heaven.

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:

Wisdom 6: Resplendent and unfading is wisdom, and she is readily perceived by those who love her... and found by those who seek her....Whoever watches for her at dawn shall not be disappointed.

Thessalonians 4: For the Lord himself...will come down from heaven....Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Matthew 25: The foolish ones, when taking their lamps, brought no oil with them, but the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps.

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to note:

A change in lifestyle could bring healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power. This is what consumer movements accomplish by boycotting certain products. They prove successful in changing the way businesses operate, forcing them to consider their environmental footprint and their patterns of production. "Purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act". (#206)

As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning....Let ours be a time remembered for **the awakening of a new reverence for life**, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life. (#207)

Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a **prophetic and contemplative lifestyle**, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption. We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible. It is the conviction that "less is more". (#222)

It is no longer enough to speak only of **the integrity of ecosystems**. We have to dare to speak of **the integrity of human life**, of the need to promote and unify all the great values. (#224)

Encountering God does not mean fleeing this world or turning our back on nature....Christianity does not reject matter. Rather...the human body is disclosed in its inner nature as a temple of the Holy Spirit. (#235)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: For a deeper reverence for life, free of the obsession with consumption, where the integrity of human life and the integrity of our ecosystems are restored, let us pray to the Lord....

Option 2: That our desire for beauty and spiritual quest for a deeper meaning in our lives may enable us to hear more clearly the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, and that God's grace may enable us to follow the example of the five wise virgins and prepare for the coming of the Lord through works of charity and justice, let us pray to the Lord....

Further Resources

Feedback: IntegralFaithForLife@gmail.com

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