

Integral Faith

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



Homily Helps, Petitions, and Bulletin Notices for the 5th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A (5 February 2017)

Homily Helps

† Comment for the day:

In today's passage from the prophet Isaiah, God calls the people of Israel to care for the most vulnerable among them. Fulfilling that divine mandate is also their collective path to holiness and the surest guarantee of Israel's security. To Israelites who look back with nostalgia to the time when David and Solomon were their kings, God offers a vision of how to make Israel great again. It is not through beefing up their military and making alliances with neighboring kingdoms. It is not by concentrating wealth in the hands of the elites. Rather, to make Israel shine like a bright light and ensure the security of its homeland, the people are called to recognize their interdependence on one another. And, they are to act according with that mandate: bestowing bread on the hungry, making sure everyone can live with dignity, and entering into a constructive dialogue to search for workable solutions to their problems.

God continues to call our communities and our own nation to seek holiness, our greatness, and genuine security by caring for the poor and for God's creation. How well do we accept our global interdependence? How willing are we to enter into dialogue to solve the common problems we face? Are we willing to reject superficial solutions and empty promises that are alien to God's vision for us? Do we seek only solutions to our own problems while ignoring the plight of our fellow citizens? As in the time of the prophet Isaiah, the wellbeing of the poor and most vulnerable must be uppermost in our thinking. To let our light shine and to reap the benefits of prosperity, our actions must be inspired and informed by God's vision and values, not by the vision and values of the dominant culture.

Sharing our bread with the hungry and sheltering the oppressed and the homeless addresses an immediate crisis while recognizing the link between climate change, food security and migration brings us to the root causes of pressing problems. We have a moral debt to the poor of this world and an obligation to future generations, those most impacted by environmental degradation.

In his letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul juxtaposes human wisdom with divine wisdom. In First Century Palestine, human wisdom was informed by the imperial Roman culture in which mercy, compassion, solidarity were viewed as character weaknesses. When it comes to our communities and nation, what kind of power do Christians draw upon? In what ways might the Gospel be challenging us? What vision informs our views on the important national issues related to the security of our homeland? Have we made the connection between our faith and such issues as nuclear disarmament, economic justice, equitable tax policies, measures to reduce pollution, and policies to promote renewable energy? These are not just social, scientific or political issues for the experts to decide; they are issues that we as members of the community also must weigh in on, bringing to bear the guidance of our faith and the wisdom of our Christian tradition.

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.):

In today's Gospel, Jesus calls us to be a light for the world. He says we are to put that light, not under a bushel basket but, on a lamp stand. What might this mean at the time when so many one-sided, shallow solutions and empty slogans are being peddled as remedies to our social ills? Our Church has the opportunity and the obligation to make a transformative contribution in this area. Unfortunately, Catholic Social Teachings remains "the best-kept secret of the Church". The wisdom of the papal encyclicals such as *Laudato Si'* have yet to reach the peoples in the pews. How might we put this light on its proper lamp stand? This Sunday's scriptural readings provide a great opportunity to do precisely that, and in doing so to share some of that rich wisdom with the assembled community.

† Scripture passages to note:

Isaiah 58: If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; if you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday.

1 Corinthians 2: Your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

Matthew 5: You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others.

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to note:

There has been a growing conviction that our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home. An interdependent world not only makes us more conscious of the negative effects of certain lifestyles and models of production and consumption which affect us all; more importantly, it motivates us to ensure that solutions are proposed from a global perspective, and not simply to defend the interests of a few countries. Interdependence obliges us to think of *one world with a common plan*. (#164)

... A global consensus is essential for confronting the deeper (environmental and social) problems, that could lead, for example, to planning a sustainable and diversified agriculture, developing renewable and less polluting forms of energy, encouraging a more efficient use of energy, promoting a better management of marine and forest resources, and ensuring universal access to drinking water. (164)

Taking advantage of abundant solar energy will require the establishment of mechanisms and subsidies which allow developing countries access to technology transfer, technical assistance and financial resources. (#172)

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... The gravity of the ecological crisis demands that we all look to the common good, embarking on a path of dialogue which demands patience, self-discipline and generosity, always keeping in mind that "realities are greater than ideas." (#201)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: For our Church that She may always have courage and commitment to speak and act on behalf of the hungry, the oppressed, and the afflicted, let us pray to the Lord....

Option 2: For our nation, that its citizens may be the salt of the earth and the light of the world by leading the efforts toward nuclear disarmament and climate justice, let us pray to the Lord....

Further Resources

Feedback: IntegralFaithForLife@gmail.com

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

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