

Caring for Our Common Home: Liturgy Resources

"Weekly *Laudato Si'* themes for bulletins and homilists."

Homily Helps, Petitions, and Bulletin Notices for the 23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time Cycle C (4 September 2016)

Homily Helps

Comment for the day:

In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks to the crowds about the high cost of following in his footsteps. Drawing on the images related to construction and warfare, he calls for uncompromising dedication to his mission of "preaching good news to the poor, proclaiming freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, release of the oppressed and proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor." The project of the Kingdom of God takes precedence even over the sacred bonds of family. Moreover, Jesus points out that to be his disciple, one must carry on his mission, acting with wisdom, prudence and intelligence.

So, how do we do that in the context of the contemporary environmental, economic and social challenges that we face? Consider chapter 4 of Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'*. There, in his discussion of "Integral Ecology" he reflects on the ways that the many arduous demands of Christian discipleship are profoundly interrelated: the individual and the community, respect for human life and care for God's earth, our inner life with God and the concern for the poor and the environment – these are all parts of a seamless garment. Since the mission of Jesus Christ is also our mission, then, we must be willing to renounce and let go of those ideologies and approaches that are too-simplistic, too-politicized, too-one-sided.

Integral ecology calls for overcoming what Pope Francis decries as "the fragmentation of knowledge." Consider Jesus's shocking statement that one must hate one's father and mother to be his disciple. Could it be that this passage challenges us to let go of the old, familiar clichés? Do we have to reexamine a pro-life stance that has ossified and resistant to including the eco-justice issues that confront Christians in our world today? What does marching the arduous path of Christian discipleship ask of us today? Protecting the dignity of human life, combating poverty, safeguarding God's creation – these should all be part of an integrated Christian vision.

Like the king marching into battle or a person wanting to construct a tower, the disciples of Jesus must respond to the signs of the times with wisdom, intelligence and prudence. The wisdom reflected in Pope Francis's notion of integral ecology can help a contemporary disciple of Jesus to be more up to the task of living out the Gospel and being instruments of God's peace and healing for our society and earth itself.

Scripture passages to note:

Wisdom 9: Who ever knew your counsel, except you had given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high?

Psalm 90: In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

Philemon 9: If you regard me as a partner, welcome him as you would me.

Homily Helps (cont.)

Scripture passages to note (cont):

Luke 14: "If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother... he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple... Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion?... Anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple."

Passages from *Laudato Si'* to note:

I suggest that we now consider some elements of an *integral ecology*, one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions... Ecology studies the relationship between living organisms and the environment in which they develop. This necessarily entails reflection and debate about the conditions required for the life and survival of society, and the honesty needed to question certain models of development, production and consumption. It cannot be emphasized enough how everything is interconnected... It follows that the fragmentation of knowledge and the isolation of bits of information can actually become a form of ignorance, unless they are integrated into a broader vision of reality. (#138)

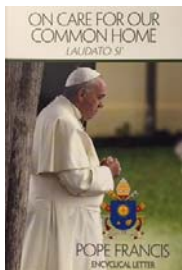
We do not face two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, ~~but~~ rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and, at the same time, protecting nature. (#139)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That our common commitment to Jesus Christ and his mission always take precedence over our particular political leaning or ideologies, let us pray to the Lord....

Option 2: For Christian parents and the catechists, that as the school year begin they may inspire young people to appreciate that respect for human life, care for the poor, and care for the earth are all interconnected, let us pray to the Lord....

Sample Bulletin Notice



In his encyclical *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home, Pope Francis challenges people to live with mercy. Just like God, whose compassion extends to all living being, we, too, created in God's own image and likeness are called to step out of our comfort zone and show mercy, especially to those on the peripheries of our interest. Who are they for you? The poor? The unborn? The refugees? The future generation whose very survival is threatened by the hyper-consumerism and intense burning of dirty fossil fuels?

As you seek to live with mercy, consider the words of Pope Francis: "A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor." (*Laudato Si'* # 49)

Further Resources

Webpage: <http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/preaching-resources>

Feedback: IntegralFaithForLife@gmail.com