

Caring for Our Common Home: Liturgy Resources

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

Homily Helps, Petitions, and Bulletin Notices for the 24th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle C (11 September 2016)

Homily Helps

Comment for the day:

In today's reading from the Book of Exodus, the Lord confronts the people of Israel. Despite being Chosen by God and delivered from slavery and oppression, they debase themselves by worshiping a molten calf, squandering the spiritual gifts that came from their special relationship with God. God speaks to Moses of His divine wrath against the people, an expression of the depth of God's deeply personal, unrequited love – passionate but patient. In the end, he holds out his mercy, allowing the people of Israel to regain their senses and reestablish their relationship with God.

The responsorial psalm and the reading from the First Letter to Timothy echo similar themes: the recognition of human sin and folly; the desire for God's forgiveness and healing; and the grateful celebration of God's infinite mercy.

The story of the Prodigal Son offers a theological lens for thinking about the way we have treated the Earth. The younger son's insistence on receiving his inheritance mirrors the demands of adolescent humanity using up the earth and its resources in a short-sighted and self-centered way. Our lack of wisdom and profligate lifestyle of hyper-consumption has resulted in a massive extinction of plant and animal species, which is now in fact taking place at a over 1,000 times the normal rate. The oceans are dying. The rainforests are being destroyed. We are squandering our inheritance of 14 billion years of evolution. Now, like the younger son, we find ourselves wallowing in a poisonous and degraded biosphere. However, there are also indications that we human beings – like the Prodigal Son – are beginning to come to our senses. The encyclical *Laudato Si'* has helped to frame the ecological challenge we face by raising questions that are both environmental and profoundly human questions. The fact that peoples of diverse beliefs and political persuasion have praised the encyclical stands as a sign of hope that could lead us to our own homecoming.

Scripture passages to note:

Exodus 32: "They have soon turned aside from the way I pointed out to them, making for themselves a molten calf and worshiping it, sacrificing to it and crying out, 'This is your God, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!'..."

"I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky; and all this land that I promised, I will give your descendants as their perpetual heritage."

Psalms 51: Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness; in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.

Homily Helps (cont.)

Scripture passages to note (cont.):

1 Timothy 1: I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and arrogant, but I have been mercifully treated because I acted out of ignorance in my unbelief. Indeed, the grace of our Lord has been abundant, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Luke 15: He squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation.... Coming to his senses.... Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.... I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.

Passages from *Laudato Si'* to note:

This sister (earth) now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her.... The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (#2)

Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth. The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes.... The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. We need to reflect on our accountability before those who will have to endure the dire consequences. (#161)

What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? This question not only concerns the environment in isolation; the issue cannot be approached piecemeal. When we ask ourselves what kind of world we want to leave behind, we think in the first place of its general direction, its meaning and its values...What is the purpose of our life in this world? Why are we here? (#160)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That the teachings of Pope Francis about the moral responsibility to care for our common home find a fertile ground in the hearts of all people for the sake of a brighter, more verdant future for our children, let us pray to the Lord....

Option 2: For those scientists, who like the prophets of our day warn us about dire consequences of the massive extinctions we are causing, that they may help our human family come to its senses and experience God's mercy, let us pray to the Lord....

Further Resources

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

Feedback: IntegralFaithForLife@gmail.com