

Integral Faith

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



Homily Helps and Petitions for the 4th Sunday of Advent, Cycle C (December 19, 2021)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Micah 5: You, Bethlehem-Ephrathah, too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; whose origin is from old, from ancient times.

Hebrews 10: I come to do your will.

Luke 1: And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me. ... Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.

† Comments for the Day:

No one person, no one place, no one creature is left out. Every created thing bears a divine manifestation of the Lord God. Not the majestic and holy city Jerusalem, but tiny insignificant Bethlehem, receives the prophetic blessing that it is to become the birthplace of the long-awaited Messiah of Israel. An old barren woman long passed her childbearing years and her kinswoman, a young virgin, come together to try and understand their mysterious and most unusual of pregnancies. A visitation in Bethlehem and a visitation in Judah; in each case a manifestation of God who is total mystery.

In his article entitled "Our Cosmic Insignificance," Oxford professor Guy Kahane reflects on the vastness of the universe and how, in "our humdrum cosmic location, and the inevitable future demise of humanity, our lives can seem utterly insignificant." He adds that, however, "we might be of immense cosmic significance though we cannot, at this time, tell whether this is the case." Our actual significance is not obvious until we consider that there may be nothing in the cosmos to care about *except* for human beings. "If we are alone, then we humans possess most value in the cosmos."

As Christians, we are called to expand that notion of significance and count all of life in the cosmos as being of immense value. We can disagree with Kahane and insist that nothing that lives is empty of worth. This is because all life has its origin in God the loving Creator who is present in all things making them significant and of great value. If all these things are recognized as revealing the essence of God, then the message is made known as God has intended from the beginning. To the extent that God's creation is destroyed, either intentionally or as what Pope Francis calls "collateral damage," then God's voice becomes muted.

Bethlehem – a royal city. Mary and Elizabeth – mothers carrying the ones who will lift the poor and have them leap with joy. This is only the beginning of a story that will shape a world and

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bring it to its toes in excitement, knowing that it has discovered its worth. As part of this new world, may we learn to see ourselves in relation to God, His other creatures, and indeed the entire cosmos.

† **Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:**

Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous. The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains, everything, as it were, a caress of God. (84)

When we can see God reflected in all that exists, our hearts are moved to praise the Lord for all his creatures and to worship him in union with them. (87)

The culture of relativism is . . . the mindset of those who say: Let us allow the invisible forces of the market to regulate the economy, and consider their impact on society and nature as collateral damage. . . This same "use and throw away" logic generates so much waste, because of the disordered desire to consume more than what is necessary. (123)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we will be moved to respect and protect all life, as a reflection of the manifestation of God in our midst, let us pray to the Lord.

Option 2: That expectant parents may welcome with joy the new lives growing within them, and will appreciate all of God's creation that will help sustain them, let us pray to the Lord.

Further Resources

Feedback: info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

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

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