

Integral Faith

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



Homily Helps, Petitions, and Bulletin Notices for the 4th Sunday of Lent, Cycle B (March 14, 2021)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

2 Chronicles 36: Early and often did the LORD, the God of their fathers, send his messengers to them, for he had compassion on his people and his dwelling place . . .

Ephesians 2: For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.

John 3: But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

† Comments for the Day:

Today's scripture focuses on God's grace and mercy. In our reading from Chronicles, Cyrus liberates the Judeans. In doing so he becomes God's means of freeing the Judeans from captivity and bringing them home despite their infidelity.

St. Paul, writing to the Church at Ephesus, praises God's love and mercy in raising us up to participate in Christ's resurrection. We are to be witnesses to God's love and grace. This Christian vocation is so vital that we are not just to do it; we are to live in it. New life is open to anyone who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God come to be with us. There is no requirement to belong to a certain ethnic or social group to receive it.

In John's gospel, Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night. He does not see who Jesus truly is. Jesus speaks of the time in the desert when the Israelites were bitten by snakes. Moses put a brass snake on a pole and the Israelites who had been bitten looked at it and were cured. This is a sign that Jesus would be lifted up on a cross for all to see. Jesus has come into the world as a sign of God's saving love. His crucifixion shows just how boundless God's love and mercy are. Our work as Christians is to witness to God's love and mercy to the world. Indeed, all creation is the result of God's love embodied in Christ.

In his encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis stresses the necessity of awareness of God as the creator of all life. Part of the work of witnessing to God's love and care for all living things is treating our beautiful earth as a precious gift from our Creator. Just as the Israelites were healed when they gazed upon the brass serpent, we can be healed by looking for signs of God's love in nature, in people, in society and working for healing in all these areas, especially for lands and peoples devastated by climate change. For example, Girl Scout troops around the USA are boycotting their annual cookie sale because the cookies contain palm oil. Palm oil plantations cause vast deforestation

and many use child labor. These young women are doing their part to heal the earth. What is each of us doing to "care for our common home"?

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

The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know things can change. The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. (13)

Some committed and prayerful Christians . . . ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an "ecological conversion," whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience. (217)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we might live out our Christian vocation to witness to God's love and mercy by caring for the poor, especially those displaced by climate change, let us pray to the Lord...

Option 2: That our observance of Lent might open our eyes to the love and mercy of God and open our hearts to the importance of our role of protectors of God's handwork, creation, let us pray to the Lord...

Further Resources

Feedback: Info@CatholicClimateCovenant.org

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

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