

Integral Faith

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



Homily Resources and Petitions for the 1st Sunday of Advent, Cycle B (3 December 2017)

Homily Helps

† Scripture passages to note:

Isaiah 64: We have all withered like leaves, and our guilt carries us away like the wind.

Psalms 80: Then we will no more withdraw from you: Give us new life, and we will call upon your name.

1 Corinthians 1: God is faithful and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Mark 13: Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.

† Comment for the day:

"Be watchful! Be alert!" These words from the Gospel of the first Sunday of Advent sound a warning alarm as we travel down the rut of business as usual. We are urged to wake up and ready ourselves because something new and momentous is about to happen. The word "advent" means "appearance" or "announcement" – the announcement of something extraordinary. And what is coming as we enter this season of Advent is the most extraordinary event ever – the birth of the Messiah to Israel, foretold by the prophets, who would usher in a new kingdom of peace and justice! And more than that, transcending even the expectations of Israel, the very incarnation of God. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, no ear has heard and no eye has seen the amazing gift that God has in store for us.

Such a gift is cause for great joy and celebration. Yet we will miss it if we are not prepared. We must be alert not only to what is coming, but to what already is. During this season of preparation, we are called to take stock of our lives and of our world. In particular, let us consider whether our actions and our habits are aligned the kingdom of God about to be announced. To embrace the kingdom of peace and justice that God holds out to us, we must let go of anger, hatred, intolerance, and discrimination against others that is rooted these vices. The union of God and humanity in Christ is a summons to intimacy with God, but we can only respond to that call if we let go of the sin and alienation that separate us from God, from others, and from creation itself.

Isaiah uses the metaphor of withered leaves blown away in the wind to describe the state of spiritual barrenness that comes from sin and injustice. Throughout our world today we witness such desolation quite literally playing out before us. The denuded landscapes, droughts, floods, and environmental disruption that we read about in the news every day – while so many pursue lives of overconsumption in complete indifference to its impact on God's creation and the poor – serve as living metaphors of the spiritual desolation that Isaiah prophesizes. In our own day, Pope Francis decries our 'throwaway

Homily Helps (cont.)

† **Comment for the day (cont.):**

culture' because it disregards both the Earth and our brothers and sisters in need. Yet ironically, our society has turned our celebration of the coming of the Prince of Peace into a celebration of this overconsumption.

In our readings for this Sunday, Paul reminds us that "God is faithful" and the psalmist prays for the day when "we will no more withdraw from you." Mark assures us that the Lord is coming, whether we are awake to his coming or not. Advent should be a time when we wake up to the possibility of a different way of living with one another and with God's creation. It is our task to be awake and alert, so that we can recognize – and participate in – the coming of the kingdom of God which Jesus will bring to life.

† **Passages from *Laudato si'* to note:**

Our goal ... is to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening in our world into our own suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it. (#19)

Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat [climate change] or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it. (#23)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: For our Church as we enter this season of Advent, that we may be alert to ways in which we can care more faithfully for God's creation and all God's people, let us pray to the Lord...

Option 2: For those who have too little, that their needs may be met, and for those who have too much, that they may hunger and thirst for justice, let us pray to the Lord...

Further Resources

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

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