

Integral Faith

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



Homily Resources and Petitions for the 3rd Sunday of Advent, Cycle B (17 December 2017)

Homily Helps

† Scripture passages to note:

Isaiah 61: As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord GOD make justice and praise spring up before all the nations.

Luke 1: He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy.

1 Thessalonians 5: Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances.

John 1: "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'make straight the way of the Lord,'" as Isaiah the prophet said."

† Comment for the day:

The readings for the third Sunday of Advent all relate to prophets and the prophetic voice, with its dual messages of repentance and hope. Biblical prophets were usually sent by God in times of distress, both to show the people how they had strayed from fidelity to God's law, and to offer hope that they could still return to right relationship with God and one another. In our day, we ourselves face distress on many fronts – seemingly endless wars around the world, a global refugee crisis, extreme weather causing death and destruction from hurricanes and wildfires, and grinding poverty for so many of God's children. We, too, need to hear the prophetic call to both repentance and hope.

The passage from Isaiah is as welcome and refreshing as a gentle rain falling on a barren land. How comforting it is to hear those words of good news for the poor, healing for the brokenhearted, and release for those who are imprisoned. Isaiah compares the expected flourishing of justice and peace among the nations to the earth bringing forth plants and to a garden springing up. Sadly, parts of our world are becoming increasingly barren, because of our failure to properly tend the garden God has entrusted to us. But Isaiah's prophetic word of hope reminds us that, just as God can make a barren land to bloom, so too can God also turn our world into one where peace and justice flourish.

Our responsorial, which takes its lines from the beautiful Magnificat of Mary, adumbrates this prophetic message of hope. Mary's hymn celebrates the greatness of God, who will upend an unjust social order by filling the hungry and sending the rich away empty. As with the passage from Isaiah, Mary's hymn announces both hope to the poor and an call to repentance for those who have turned their backs on people in need. The passage from St. Paul reminds us not to turn a deaf ear to the prophetic voice – as uncomfortable as it may sometimes be for us to hear – for to do so would be to "quench the Spirit." In the Gospel, John the Baptist is explicitly asked if he is a prophet, a title he eschews. Instead,

Homily Helps (cont.)

† **Comment for the day (cont.):**

he quotes from the prophet Isaiah to announce that he is simply pointing us toward the Messiah who is yet to come.

In these final weeks of Advent, our task is to prepare for the coming of Jesus – both by repenting of how we have failed to live out God's law, and by acting in hope for the kingdom of justice and peace that He will bring.

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

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" (Romans 8:22). (#2)

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 that 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)

Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades. (#25)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we may open our ears to hear the prophetic voice of Pope Francis, as he call us to an ecological conversion, let us pray to the Lord...

Option 2: That we may hear and respond to the prophetic call to care for all of God's people and all of God's creation, let us pray to the Lord...

Further Resources

Feedback: Info@CatholicClimateCovenant.org

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

Visit our webpage to sign up to receive these resources delivered to your email inbox each month.