

Homily Resources and Petitions for the 29th Sunday of SEASON, Cycle A (18 October 2020)

Homily Helps

† Scripture passages to note:

Isaiah 45: I have called you by your name, giving you a title though you knew me not.

Psalms 96: Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord all you lands.

1 Thessalonians: We give thanks...knowing, brothers and sisters loved by God, how you were chosen. For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and the Holy Spirit and with much conviction.

Matthew 22: At that he said to them: "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."

† Comment for the day:

The Scripture readings offer an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between our faith and our politics, a sensitive subject. The reading from Isaiah praises Cyrus, ruler of Persia. When he conquered Babylon, he freed the peoples who were being held captive there, including the Jews. He was chosen as an instrument of Israel's liberation. Centuries later the United Nations recognized the written record of his deeds as the first declaration of human rights. Our liberating God is able to work through all sorts of individuals and actions to promote the rights and well-being of God's people.

In Thessalonica it was the Gentiles who responded to God's word, and not the Jews to whom Paul first preached. After leaving the city, Paul sent Timothy to check on the new community, and he returned with a good report. Paul writes his letter to the Thessalonians, expressing gratitude for their faith and love. He encourages them to make God's promises living realities in the world.

In the Gospel, Matthew relates another attempt by the authorities to put Jesus in a bind. If he says to pay the tax, he sides with the hated Roman conquerors; if not, he will be arrested for inciting rebellion. Jesus' reply is often understood as a command to keep religion and politics entirely separate, a command not to impose our beliefs on others. However, it does not prohibit activism. David Lose has written: "Jesus invites/demands that we think regularly and relentlessly about how all our decisions...what we buy, who we vote for, and how we spend our times should be shaped by the confession that, indeed, the whole world is God's and everything in it, including us." (David Lose, *God, Caesar and the Power of a Good Question*, www.workingpreaching.org, Oct. 9, 2011).

Pope Francis is eloquent in urging us to reject consumerism, to be mindful of the impact of our choices on the environment, and to advocate with governments for earth-friendly policies. He tirelessly proclaims that climate change is a moral issue and that God did not create the earth to be devastated and exploited by humans for their own selfish purposes. Let us honor our obligation to care for the earth as our common home, and to promote the well-being of all our sisters and brothers.

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

Yet access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity. (#30)

A healthy politics is sorely needed, capable of reforming and coordinating institutions, promoting best practices and overcoming undue pressure and bureaucratic inertia. It should be added, though, that even the best mechanisms can break down when there are no worthy goals and values or a genuine and profound humanism to serve as the basis of a noble and generous society. (#181)

What is needed is a politics which is far-sighted and capable of a new, integral and interdisciplinary approach to handling the different aspects of the crisis... A strategy for real change calls for rethinking processes in their entirety, for it is not enough to include a few superficial ecological considerations while failing to question the logic which underlies present-day culture. A healthy politics needs to be able to take up this challenge. (#197)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That the Spirit guide us to be mindful of the earth and its peoples in the everyday decisions we make, let us pray to the Lord...

Option 2: That in complex circumstances, we may find our voice and advocate for the planet and for the rights of all its people, let us pray to the Lord...

Further Resources

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